

Dear Editor and UNM Community,

This coming Saturday, December 5th, the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) is going to consider a resolution regarding the allocation of student fees to the athletic department. Two versions of this resolution have been proposed:

1) “The GPSA calls on the Student Fee Review Board to place UNM Athletics on probation and recommend that funding be reallocated to programs that are consistent with the mission of the university.”

2) “The GPSA calls on the Student Fee Review Board to place UNM Athletics on probation and recommend that funding be reallocated to programs that are consistent with the mission of the university. The GPSA does not want to harm UNM's athletic programs in good academic standing or academic programs like Sports Administration, and so ask that those athletic programs with an average G.P.A. greater than 3.0 and Sports Administration teaching assistants not be affected by the withdrawal of this money.”

There are several problems with this resolution, regardless of which version is used, that need to be addressed:

First, Sport Administration is not under the Athletic Department. Our program is part of the Department of Health, Exercise and Sport Science and we are dismayed that we have been included in something we have nothing to do with. Yes, some of our students are graduate assistants in the Athletic Department. However, other students who work for the Athletic Department are in athletic training, exercise physiology, and other areas. Why has Sport Administration been singled out?

Second, the less drastic version of this resolution calls for all athletic programs with above a 3.0 GPA to be exempted from the effects of the resolution. What does GPA have to do with this? This resolution is a response to the incidents with Coach Locksley and to Vice-President Krebs actions. Why are the GPAs of student-athletes, who have nothing to do with the actions of these men, now relevant?

Third, based on the Athletic Department's report on Spring 2009 team GPAs, only 4 teams had GPAs last spring below a 3.0: football, basketball (men's), tennis (men's) and track (men's). Given that the Student Fee Review Board allocates funds each March for the next fiscal year, student-athletes and graduate assistants associated with the above teams some of whom were not involved in the program earlier) could be negatively affected in 2010-2011 due to the academic performance of those from a year or two before. If the first version of the resolution is passed, teams with good academic performance could be punished for the performance of other teams. Does this seem fair? How many of you would like a part of your funding to be based on the academic performance of people who came before you? Or worse, on the actions of your coaches, professors and administrators, over whom you have little to no control?

Fourth, student fees are not allocated to each team – they are allocated to the Athletic Department in general. The Athletic Department's own 2010 Fiscal year budget has over \$1.5 million from mandatory student fees, amounting to 5.5% of all Athletic Department revenue. Although this is a small fraction of the Athletic Department's budget, we cannot pick and choose which teams and programs we want to receive this money. If we begin allocating student fees in such a manner, then should we not apply a similar process for other organizations that receive student fees? Why should Athletics be treated differently?

Those in the GPSA pushing this resolution have failed to look at the larger impact of withdrawing money from the Athletic Department. I and the vast majority of my department encourage GPSA representatives to vote against this resolution and turn their attentions to more important matters. For example: developing a strategic plan to increase allocations to graduate students for research and conferences; creating a strong partnership with the University's Recruitment Department; helping to bridge the gap with campus diversity; and constructing community outreach programs. We invite all graduate and undergraduate students to voice their concerns about this resolution on Saturday, December 5 at 11 a.m. in the Domenici Health Education Building, room 3010. This is a time when our student body and student government should be supporting student-athletes and student assistants who find themselves involved with situations beyond their control.

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