Intercollegiate Athletics Committee 2003-2004 Annual Report

To the Academic Senate Los Angeles Division:

The academic progress of our athletes is highly monitored. Administrative Vice Chancellor Pete Blackman oversees the Athletics Department. Kim Barger, Director of Academic Services in the Athletics Department heads up a very important tutoring, monitoring and counseling program. Three faculty members (one appointed by the Senate) serve on the 5 member Athletic Admissions Committee chaired by Tom Lifka, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Academic Services.

Given all this attention, I began my first year as Chair of the IAC wondering if the committee should be disbanded. Tom Lifka persuaded me that a group of independent minded faculty could play a useful role in asking tough questions and pushing for change where needed. I am now convinced he was right.

The IAC set two goals for the year. The first was to establish effective communication with the two new head coaches in the critical TV sports (Men's Football and Basketball.) We invited each to a meeting of the committee both to listen and to impress upon them that a critical need was for each of them to personally reinforce the academic goals of their student athletes. Both Coach Howland and Coach Dorrell impressed us with their commitment to academics and their understanding of the difficult challenges that they face in maintaining high graduation rates and winning seasons.

The second long-term goal was to establish an effective means of monitoring the progress of the student athletes. Athletes arrive in three categories. Each member of the first group satisfies the minimum requirements for UC eligibility (course taken, GPAs, SAT scores etc.) Members of the second group do not satisfy every requirement but are judged to be adequately prepared for a rigorous UCLA education. The third very small group are judged to be of higher risk but are admitted because of exceptional athletic potential. All members of this group are in the TV sports.

The committee found that, by and large, students in the non-TV sports were making reasonable progress and earning satisfactory grades. The only concern was the considerable concentration of athletes in three majors (History, Sociology and Political Science).

The situation in the TV sports, and particularly in football was found to be alarming. Grade point averages of recent cohorts were falling over time and a number of students were on the verge of ineligibility. The data summarized by the committee was presented to the Athletics Admissions Committee, Pete Blackman and the Athletics Department. The IAC recommended that less funds be spent on tutoring of student athletes in good standing and more on those in severe academic difficulty. Pete Blackman stepped in with a requested a proposal from the Athletics Department for effective utilization of supplementary funding. After surveying other Pac 10 schools it was learned that UCLA's student-athlete support services were relatively under-funded. The proposed plan was to increase tutoring services aimed at students in academic difficulty and to hire a professional learning specialist. The committee will monitor the effectiveness of this funding.

As noted above, there is a high concentration of student athletes in three majors. Last
year there was no faculty representation on the committee from any of the three departments. We are pleased to report that we have added a new member from the History Department. We have also added a faculty member who was a student-athlete herself (in Basketball). She will bring another important perspective to the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Cracchiolo, Orthopedic Surgery
Robert Goldberg, Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology
Sharon Hame, Orthopedic surgery
Esther Sinclair, Psychology/Behavioral Science
Donald Morrison, Management
JOHN RILEY, CHAIR, Economics