

## UIS faculty to analyze athletic program after three coaches quit

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Faculty members at the University of Illinois at Springfield will meet Monday afternoon to discuss athletics at the school, as well as concerns surrounding the recent resignations of three coaches.

"The meeting is meant to discuss athletics at UIS, the ways faculty are and are not involved and some of the difficulties we continue to face here with our athletic program," said Pat Langley, chair of the UIS Campus Senate and a professor of women and gender studies and legal studies.

"It would be good for the faculty senators to know where the faculty stands on this."

The faculty group also is expected to discuss a proposal that UIS athletic director Rodger Jehlicka be dismissed.

Joe Fisher resigned his positions as head softball coach and head volleyball coach on March 20, as did Roy Gilmore, the head women's basketball coach and assistant softball coach. Men's and women's golf coach Jay Davis resigned on March 26, three weeks after he had been placed on administrative leave with pay.

No details have been released about what prompted the resignations, although Davis' resignation apparently was not connected to those of Fisher and Gilmore.

The university will not comment, citing policy that prevents discussing personnel matters. Attempts to reach the three coaches have been unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, the UIS Campus Senate – which includes students and administrators as well as faculty members – apparently will consider a resolution calling for UIS Chancellor Richard Ringeisen to fire Jehlicka.

A draft copy of the resolution obtained by The State Journal-Register also recommends that the University of Illinois Board of Trustees investigate what role the UIS administration played in the university's alleged failure to protect the safety and academic success of student-athletes.

In an e-mail sent Tuesday morning to faculty members, Langley said Kathryn Eisenhart, a faculty senator and associate professor of legal studies, asked that the resolution be included on the agenda for an April 17 meeting of the Campus Senate.

In an response e-mailed Tuesday evening, Ringeisen wrote that he "unequivocally" opposes the resolution's recommendations.

The resolutions claims Jehlicka failed to:

- \* Make the safety and academic success of students his primary goal.
- \* Do due diligence in hiring and supervising coaches.
- \* Follow recommendations made by the 2004 Athletics Review Task Force.
- \* Work closely with the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, faculty athletic representative and Faculty Senate to ensure the safety and academic success of student-athletes.

Ringeisen was unavailable for a telephone interview Thursday, but responded to questions through UIS spokeswoman Cheryl Peck.

"This whole matter is really all about our student-athletes," Ringeisen said when asked why he opposes the resolution. "We know they're very supportive of Rodger Jehlicka. Dr. Jehlicka has shown since he arrived here that he can build programs so that we can enter NCAA Division II successfully.

"I'm convinced that under his direction we'll build a wonderful environment in which our students can succeed both in the classroom and as student athletes."

Jehlicka said Thursday Ringeisen had mentioned the proposed resolution to him, but he had not read it.

Asked about the resolution's allegations, Jehlicka said, "I have a Ph.D. (in sports administration). Obviously, academics are very important to me. Ask any coach or student athlete. They will support that."

Regarding hiring coaching staff, he said, "Most of the people we have here right now are people that I have hired. I didn't hire some of those people that are no longer here."

Jehlicka arrived at UIS in December 2005. Fisher was appointed to his positions in 2003. Gilmore was hired in early 2005 on a "visiting" basis, which allowed him to remain in his posts for three years without a mandatory regional search. When a search was conducted in 2007, Gilmore reapplied for his jobs and was hired. Davis was hired in 2007.

Jehlicka said he couldn't respond to the proposal's criticism that he hasn't followed the recommendations of the 2004 Athletics Review Task Force.

"I wasn't here in 2004," Jehlicka said. "I don't know anything about the Task Force report."

The Athletics Review Task Force issued 11 recommendations in 2004. They focused on procedures to deal with infractions by student-athletes, closer control of athletic scholarships and stronger emphasis on academics for athletes.

Jehlicka also said the claim he has failed to work with the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, the faculty athletic representative and the Faculty Senate is "totally inaccurate."

"I'm not going to even respond to that," he said.

Langley disagreed.

"One of the issues that we've had over the years is the lack of transparency and not involving the faculty government," she said.

"We found out from the SJ-R (on March 25) Jay Davis had been suspended from March 4. The chair of the Campus Senate (Langley) had not been told. The chair of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (Ryan Williams) had not been told. The Faculty Athletics Representative (Marcel Yoder) did not know."

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