

Thank you for your note from last night and related documents, which we are currently reviewing and will discuss with our members over the next couple of days. We are eager to hear more about your concerns and very happy to discuss. I will come back to you in the coming days following discussion with our members and student-athlete leaders to schedule a call for this week to discuss the matters that you have raised.

As I am sure you are aware, we have many channels in place to hear directly from our student-athletes on a regular basis, including both student-athletes who are elected and a part of our governance structure as well as more broadly student-athletes across our campuses. Our student-athletes have been a part of our governance structure since 2015 and have direct input into Conference decisions. I am proud to say that it is a result of this direct communication with our student-athletes that we as a Conference and across our campuses have been able to make so much progress over the past years on behalf of student-athletes. This has particularly been the case over the past months as we have worked to protect the health and safety of our student-athletes during the current COVID-19 crisis (including with discussions with student-athlete parents, among others), as well as with respect to the development of our social justice and anti-racism plan. We also engaged with and take on feedback from our Football Student-Athlete Working Group, created in May, on these important topics.

Specific to health and safety, the health and well-being of student-athletes is our No. 1 priority, and for this reason we have made clear on July 10 that that any student-athlete who chooses not to return to competition for health or safety reasons will have their scholarship protected and will remain in good standing with their team. We support any student-athlete who chooses to opt out for health and safety reasons.

Additionally, as you raise it in your letter, I wanted to make sure that you understood that none of our universities have asked any of our student-athletes to sign waivers related to COVID-19.

Prior to our discussion to be scheduled for later this week, I thought it would be helpful to provide some background on topics that you have raised in your letter:

### **Student-Athlete Health & Safety/COVID-19**

The Pac-12's fall competition plans have been directed by medical experts and informed by the advice of public health experts, with the health, safety and well-being of our student-athletes, coaches and staff always the first priority. The Pac-12 Medical Advisory Committee, who have developed comprehensive health and well-being protocols and who meet multiple times per week, have guided the Pac-12's return-to-competition plans. This committee is comprised of leading experts in the areas of infectious disease and public health. Additionally, the Pac-12's return to competition plans have always been subject to and in accordance with the advice of public health officials and all relevant government orders, and are continuously evaluated based on the best available science and data. As indicated above, the Pac-12 has made clear that any student-athlete who

chooses not to return to competition for health or safety reasons will have their scholarship protected and will remain in good standing with their team.

I hope that you have had a chance to participate in the webinar that all Pac-12 student-athletes were invited to discuss these matters directly with our medical advisory committee, and that your parents were able to participate in the webinar that we held for student-athlete parents with our committee. We will continue to maintain this level of openness, transparency and access for our student-athletes.

### **Social Justice & Anti-Racism**

The Pac-12 has a long history of supporting student-athlete voices and initiatives on social justice. On July 1, the Pac-12 announced a series of next steps to combat racism and support social justice, including (i) a newly-created head of diversity & inclusion position at the Conference, (ii) the formation of a social justice & anti-racism advisory group that includes student-athlete representatives, and (iii) the launch of series of student-athlete & coach anti-racism forums. These initiatives were developed based upon conversations with student-athletes, along with coaches and others. Additionally, the Pac-12 has for many years had an ImpACT initiative that includes partnerships, educational sessions for student-athletes, and activations at events with civil rights leaders like RISE and the Anti-Defamation League. Our newly formed group in this area is actively continuing to solicit input from student-athletes on actions that we can take.

### **NIL/Economic Opportunity**

The Pac-12 supports national NIL legislation to provide student-athletes with the same opportunity to monetize their name, image and likeness as all other students. Our position on NIL have been informed by extensive discussions with and input from our student-athletes. Two of our six states in the Pac-12 footprint (California and Colorado) have already passed state laws. We have discussed the NIL matter extensively with the Pac-12 Student-Athlete Leadership Team (SALT), as well as conducted roundtable discussions with student-athletes on our campuses over the last six months to get a broader perspective. We agree with student-athletes that all 7,000 Pac-12 student-athletes need to compete under a single set of rules and have the same opportunity to monetize their NIL, and are actively working towards those goals.

### **Student-Athlete Health & Well-Being**

The Pac-12 has been a leader in supporting student-athlete health and well-being, including through our Student-Athlete Health & Well-Being Initiative dedicated to supporting student-athletes and which receives significant funding each year. Among the many initiatives related to student-athlete health and well-being that we have made important progress on are the following –

- o ***Enhanced Medical Coverage:*** Since 2015, all Pac-12 student-athletes receive four years of post-eligibility medical care for injuries, twice as many years of coverage as any other major conference.

- o ***Guaranteed Degree Completion:*** Since 2015, any Pac-12 student-athlete who leaves school before graduating can return to campus and use the remainder of their educational scholarship to earn their degrees.
- o ***Cost of Attendance:*** Since 2015, students who play sports at in the Pac-12 and any Autonomy Five institutions are eligible to receive the full cost of attendance benefits as part of their athletic scholarship. In total, with scholarships and cost of attendance stipends, students may receive benefits for tuition, fees, room, board, books, transportation, general supplies, and personal expenses.
- o ***Guaranteed Scholarships:*** The Pac-12 and peers in the Autonomy Five conferences voted in 2015 to guarantee that athletic scholarships cannot be canceled for poor athletics performance.
- o ***Inclusion of Student-Athlete Voice:*** The Pac-12 is the only major conference in which student-athletes are represented in the Conference governance structure with its Student-Athlete Leadership Team (SALT).
- o ***Mental Health Support:*** The Pac-12 developed and advocated for an NCAA policy that would require institutions to make mental health services, resources and education available for student-athletes. The Pac-12 and its peers in the Autonomy Five conferences unanimously voted in 2019 to support and adopt that policy.
- o ***Better Time Balance:*** In 2017, The Pac-12 and its peers in the Autonomy Five conferences, in consultation with students, coaches, faculty and administrators, approved changes giving students more time to pursue academics, work, internships, or additional rest and recovery. Students who play sports will have an additional 21 days away from athletics, in most cases. Student-athletes will be involved in the establishment of their schedules, allowing for more transparency for student-athletes than ever before.
- o ***Concussion Protocols & Independent Medical Care*** – At all Pac-12 and peer Autonomy Five Conference institutions, medical officials have “unchallengeable autonomous authority” in deciding a student’s ability to play a sport.
- o ***Sports Nutrition & Unlimited Meals/Snacks***– Pac-12 universities provide leading nutritional support and resources to all student-athletes. Since 2014, all Pac-12 universities provide unlimited meals and snacks to student-athletes
- o ***Transfer Rule*** - the Pac-12 Conference is supportive of national NCAA legislation granting football and basketball student-athletes the ability to transfer between schools more easily (i.e. similar to student-athletes in other sports). Such legislation is slated to be voted on by the NCAA in January 2021.

I am copying your elected student-athlete representatives as they will be an important part, as they have been for the past years, of our ongoing efforts to support student-athletes.

Thank you again for your email. We look forward to finding a convenient time to speak later this week.

Kind regards,

Larry