

Dear Senators,

November 1, 2013

Hugh Page, in his role as Dean of the First Year of Studies asked if the Faculty Senate could revisit the issue of freshman Phys. Ed.

The brief history of this issue is that in 2012–2013 Undergraduate Studies Committee of Academic Council (USCAC) reviewed and discussed the AY 2011 – 2012 report prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee commissioned to study the Physical Education Requirement. It got kicked down the road so there may be formation of an additional ad hoc group in AY 2013 – 2014 to revisit the report and to propose a final recommendation and implementation plan to be considered by USCAC.

I don't think anyone wants to spend too much time on the issue. My hope is that we can discuss this for maybe 15 minutes at the Nov 5 meeting, vote on the proposed alternatives (see below), and let Hugh Page know the results of our informal poll.

I will try to save you reading the 22 page report that is available here:
(https://provost.nd.edu/assets/97521/pewi_report.pdf) by offering a brief recap.

Briefly the issue for us is:

- Is a PE requirement consistent with Notre Dame's academic aspirations?
- Does requiring every first year student to spend 100 minutes a week in a PE-wellness class enhance/detract from Notre Dame's academic aspirations?

The report gave three alternatives:

Alternative #1: Remove PE / wellness from the Notre Dame curriculum; merge PE activities into rec Sports. To avoid a significant loss of engagement with first year students on mind/body/spirit issues, have an increased level of first-year programming through the Office of Student Affairs. This is similar to Northwestern, Princeton, and Vanderbilt.

Alternative #2: Retain a Department of Physical Education and Wellness with curricular responsibilities. Offer for-credit, semester-long electives to all undergraduate students that would not be required for graduation. They would be taken for credit and graded either on an A-F or pass/fail basis. This is the "Cornell model" .

Alternative #3: Retains a PE-wellness requirement for every student but reduce it to a one-semester wellness course – while simultaneously offering an expanded slate of electives.

I would like us to record a vote on how many people prefer the various options. We may also record a vote on a 4th option, "don't care", if that is preferred by the group.

Thanks for your cooperation on this.

Paul McGinn