

YALE-NUS COLLEGE

Athletics Report

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1 INTRODUCTION

This is a report with queries and feedback on Yale-NUS's Athletics Department and the state of Athletics more broadly in Yale-NUS, put together by the the Student Government. It consists of summarised feedback and suggestions from Athletics captains, IFG captains, and IFG committee members.

Background

The Athletics scene in Yale-NUS College has been **disorganised**. Athletics events are planned and executed by committees (such as the IFG Committee), comprising of students selected on an ad-hoc basis by the administrative arm (the Athletics Department), without basis within a long-term framework and process. This has caused **dissatisfaction** among the students in the athletic community in Yale-NUS, and has brought up questions on the long-term sustainability of athletics in Yale-NUS.

In response to student feedback on the perceived dysfunction and lack of clear information, and in line with the Student Government's Constitution³, which demands student representation and requires the existence of a committee to represent the interests of students in addressing particular issues.

There exist several key areas for improvement:

1. Establishing a process for recruitment and selection of Athletics student-leaders, with a long-term leadership structure (the 'Athletics Council'), and establishing formal roles or remuneration for contribution where applicable,
2. Clarifying the role and responsibilities of administrative officers in the Athletics department, and reviewing the achievements of the Department to date,
3. Streamlining cooperation and processes between Athletics groups and the Athletics Department, particularly on procurement of equipment, access to external facilities, and setting-up of matches with external teams,

³ Article IV, Section Two, Part (A).

The Student Government shall create Standing or Select committees for the purpose of addressing particular issues, and appoint students to such committees as needed.

Article IV, Section Two, Part (C).

Standing committees shall represent specific interest areas of the school, including, but not limited to: arts, athletics, academics, Double Degree Program (DDP), wellness, etc., and once created will remain in place unless dissolved by the Student Government.

4. Establishing a sustainable calendar of events for Athletics in the college, including but not limited to: the Inter-Faculty Games (IFGs), Inter-College Games (ICGs), the Inter-Residential College Games (IRCGs).

Process and structure

The contents of this report come from central meeting between the Student Government and members of the Athletics community on 14 September 2015. Additional feedback was solicited following the meeting, and clarified with members of the IFG committee in a secondary follow-up review meeting on 5 October 2015.

This report raises both queries and recommendations for addressing the organisation of the Athletics Department.

All contributors listed above participated in the crafting of the queries and recommendations in this report. The central meeting invitation was extended to all Athletics groups within Yale-NUS College, to ensure these recommendations are representative of the Athletics community. The meeting was closed-door to ensure that student feedback would be independently given. By ‘Athletics community’, we refer to (i) sports teams competing in IFGs e.g. Basketball, Floorball; (ii) athletic groups that do not compete in IFGs e.g. Crew, Wakeboarding, Rock Climbing; (iii) Mind Sports teams competing in IFGs e.g. Bridge, Chess, Reversi.

Terms and References

- **IFG** refers to the annual Inter-Faculty Games organised by participating faculties of the National University of Singapore in conjunction with Yale-NUS College.
- **ICG** refers to the annual Inter-Collegiate Games, organised by the Colleges in University Town, including Tembusu, Cinnamon, CAPT, RC4, RVRC, and Yale-NUS College.
- **IRCG** refers to the Inter-Residential College Games, previously organised by Yale-NUS students, and last conducted on 28th March in the RC4 MPH in conjunction with RC³.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Government and Athletics community would like for the Athletics Department to take on the following tasks, or to clarify if they fall under student leadership :

1. Organisation of Athletics leadership within the college, including :
 - a. Formation and leadership of the Athletics Council,
 - b. Establishing a roster of Captains for each IFG/ICG sport;
2. Provision and allocation of training facilities and equipment, including :
 - a. Rostering sports practices in the Multi-Purpose Hall,
 - b. Information dissemination on use of Multi-Purpose Hall,
 - c. Procuring sports equipments for teams,
 - d. Sourcing and funding for alternative training facilities for sports who do not have the appropriate facilities on-campus, and in the event of conflicting school events;
3. Clarification on **Athletics Department responsibilities**, including :
 - a. The organisational structure of the Athletics Department,
 - b. The staffing of the Athletics Department, and their respective roles;
4. Creation of **Student Associate** roles for the Athletics Department with appropriate remuneration, with the primary portfolio of coordinating and organising major sporting events such as IFG, ICG and IRCG;
5. Formulation of IFG and ICG policy, including :
 - a. Providing a feedback channel on IFGs and ICGs, including inconsistency in rules and organising of the Games,
 - b. Creating a handover procedure for IFG and ICG organisers for successive student-representatives,
 - c. Verification if all IFG/ICG sports (including Mind Sports) may obtain funding from the Athletics Department, and clarification of such procedures;
6. Planning and organisation of IRCGs, including :
 - a. Update on the status quo of planning, and a timeline of steps being taken,
 - b. Schedule and sports to be played,
 - c. Outreach to relevant student organisation collaborators.

3 AREAS OF FOCUS

1. **Athletics Leadership.** Organisation of Athletics leadership within the college, including:

- a. Formation and leadership of the Athletics Council.

Overall leadership within the Athletics community has been rudderless. There were previous attempts to create an Athletics Council, including a Constitution written by student representatives. The Student Government understands that past efforts have not been conclusive, and would like to know what the Athletics Department's plans are in this direction.

- b. Establishing and communicating with a roster of Captains for each IFG/ICG sport. while establishing guidelines and protocols for captaincy and handover.

Thus far, students organising IFGs have been responsible for identifying captains for IFG sports. The Student Government understands that a full, updated roster of captains for each sport was created by students for this IFG, which led to significant difficulties for those students due to some sports not having a captain, e.g. because of Study Abroad. The Government seeks to clarify whether maintaining an updated roster of sports leaders and captains is the task of students, or whether this responsibility falls within the Athletics Department's purview.

2. **Resources.** Provision and allocation of training facilities and equipment, including :

- a. Rostering sports practices in the Multi-Purpose Hall.

The Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH) is the main facility used by athletics teams and clubs for training. At present, 8 sports are using the MPH for practices twice a week. Rostering of sports practices requires de-conflicting between preferred time-slots across various teams and clubs. The Student Government would like to clarify if this responsibility falls within the Athletics Department's purview, or if plenipotentiary powers have been accorded to any other decision-making body, comprised of students or otherwise.

b. Information dissemination on use of Multi-Purpose Hall.

The Student Government would like to request that the Athletics Department maintain accessible records of usage of the Multi-Purpose Hall, since it is primarily used for Athletics events and also the primary resource for Athletics teams. These records should reflect, inter alia, (i) regular trainings, (ii) special events (such as inauguration), and (iii) external Athletics events host by Yale-NUS college (such as friendly matches).

c. Procuring and managing sports equipments for teams.

Procurement procedures fall directly under the Athletics Department. The Student Government would like to request that there be a clear process and timeline for procurement, ideally including (i) appropriate approving officer or point-of-contact, (ii) guidelines for proposals, and (iii) expected time required for approval. We would also like to clarify whether the onus of sourcing for equipment and budgeting falls on administrators or student captains. Further, we would like to ask if there are any clear rules or guidelines regarding responsible use and storage of sports equipment, such as in the MPH Equipment Room.

d. Sourcing and funding for alternative training facilities for sports who do not have the appropriate facilities on-campus.

There are Athletics teams and clubs (such as Soccer, Touch Rugby, and Tennis) which require use of external facilities. The Athletics Department has provided insufficient support for requisition of such facilities, such as the NUS tennis courts, and this has left some sports with no choice but to search for ad-hoc alternatives such as the ACS(I) field, through their own alumni connections. The Student Government would like to request that the Athletics Department increase support to Athletics teams and clubs facing such facilities constraints, and look into creating a specific, accessible process for them to request access to the training spaces necessary.

3. **Athletics Department.** Clarification on Athletics Department responsibilities, including :

- a. The organisational structure of the Athletics Department.

Students are unclear on how the organisation for the Athletics Department operates. The Student Government would like to request an organisational chart for staff within the Department.

- b. The staffing of the Athletics Department, and their respective roles.

Students are unclear on the membership of and delineation of responsibilities between staff on the Athletics Department. This creates inefficiencies in follow-up for students. The Student Government would like to request the terms-of-reference for staff in the Athletics Department. (At present, the Yale-NUS website only outlines the broad areas of jurisdiction for the department as a whole.⁴)

4. **Student Associates.** Creation of Student Associate roles for the Athletics Department with appropriate remuneration.

Student volunteers who stepped up have served in various capacities: as ICG and IFG representatives working with counterparts from NUS, organising the IRCGs, coordination of IFG and ICG participation, and logistics, publicity and recruiting for the competitions. These tasks are intensive and time-consuming, and require close coordination with Athletics staff. The Student Government would like to propose the creation of 3 Student Associate roles to handle relevant tasks in support of the Athletics Department.

⁴ The areas of departmental jurisdiction can be found on the following Yale-NUS website page : <http://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/athletics/resources-provided-by-athletic-department/>

5. **IFG and ICG Policy.** Formulation of IFG and ICG policy, including :

- a. Providing a feedback channel on IFGs and ICGs, including inconsistency in rules and organising of the Games.

The Student Government would like to clarify if feedback on IFGs and ICGs should be submitted to the Athletics Department, or to a devolved body with these responsibilities. At present, the understanding of the Student Government is that the IFG Committee was tasked with organising IFGs for 2015, but not with handling feedback or coordinating handover procedures.

- b. Creating a handover procedure for IFG and ICG organisers for successive student-representatives.

There is no protocol for handover of IFG and ICG responsibilities.

- c. Verification if all IFG/ICG sports (including Mind Sports) may obtain funding from the Athletics Department, and clarification of such procedures.

‘Mind Sports’ teams (Bridge, Chess, DotA, and Reversi) are sent by Yale-NUS to compete in IFGs and ICGs. The Student Government would like to clarify if funding for training towards the competitions (e.g. coaching for Bridge) should fall under the Athletics Department or the Student Organisations’ budget.

6. **IRCG Planning.** IRCG organisation and logistics, including :

- a. An update on the status quo of planning, and a timeline of steps being taken.

The Government has been informed that the Athletics Department is in the process of planning the next IRCG, and that it is presently scheduled for November 2015. Owing to the closeness of this date and the lack of information presently being disseminated among students, the Government would like to request a timeline for IRCG planning and an update on the present state of its organisation.

- b. Schedule and sports to be played.

Previously, sports captains were approached prior to the IRCG event day, for the IRCG organisers to secure student referees, equipment and assistance with match-running. The Student Government understands that no such outreach has yet taken place, and would like to clarify if a similar arrangement will be adopted for the next IRCG, and if so, when captains will be informed of the need for their participation.

- c. Outreach to student organisations.

The Government understands that the last IRCG was a collaborative effort by the organising committee and the student organisation RC³, which provided some logistical support and side-events such as the closing ceremony. As such, we would like to inquire whether a similar collaboration will take place for the next IRCG, or whether it will be put up solely by the Athletics Department.

4 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER ACTION

This report is non-exhaustive in reflecting the views, concerns, and feedback of representatives of the Athletics community in Yale-NUS College. This means that (i) there is more untapped feedback beyond that which is provided, and (ii) students have details of incidents and lapses occurring which have prompted these recommendations and feedbacks, with cases concerning delays and mismanagement of purchases, loss of equipment, long response times, and other similar difficulties.

The role of the Student Government in this process has been to facilitate and concretise student concerns and feedback, in the spirit of a neutral mediator and in response to strong sentiment on the ground. We sincerely hope for a swift and comprehensive resolution to these issues, and look forward to working with the administration where needed in the implementation of solutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

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on behalf of the Yale-NUS Student Government