

MOTION:

The Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) moves that the Twin Cities Faculty Delegation rescind its membership in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA).

COMMENT:

COIA was chartered in March 2003 as a group advocating for reform in intercollegiate athletics. It was specifically chartered as a group to present the perspective of faculty senate leaders at Bowl Championship Series schools. The Twin Cities Faculty Delegation voted to join COIA on February 12, 2004, endorsing COIA's 2003 Framework for Comprehensive Athletics Reform.

COIA issued a number of policy papers during its early years, including policy papers on the faculty role in campus athletics governance (2004), academic integrity in intercollegiate athletics (2005), and reforming intercollegiate athletics (2007). COIA has issued few reports or statements based on a vote of its 64 member faculty senates, and has instead issued periodic reports, endorsements, and statements from its steering committee. COIA is also in the midst of a controversial set of bylaw changes in which the current steering committee has been attempting to declare new bylaws passed by a vote of 18-7 with 7 abstentions, which calls into question whether these bylaws are validly adopted under the terms of the existing bylaws.

At the September 2016 meeting of faculty governance leaders from the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA), a session was held on the question of what to do about COIA. The presentation focused on the challenge that COIA did not seem to be fulfilling its purpose and attempted to ascertain whether the BTAA faculty governance leaders (ten of whom are COIA members) wished to invest effort in reforming the organization. At that meeting, no interest emerged. Much of the discussion focused on ensuring that the organization did not use the good name of our institutions in issuing statements that schools were unaware of and/or did not support. A follow-up discussion with our BTAA colleagues included explanations of why one school had disaffiliated from COIA (it felt it was achieving its goals in oversight more effectively itself and lacked common interest with many of the schools in the coalition), and that another school was likely going to be disaffiliating this spring. At the same time, the lack of general response made it seem unlikely that the conference would undertake a coordinated departure.

The University of Minnesota has effective internal faculty participation in oversight and governance of intercollegiate athletics, including two faculty athletics representatives (FARs) to the NCAA (currently Professors Emily Hoover and Perry Leo), a Faculty Academic Oversight for Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (FAOIAC) that reports to the Faculty Senate, and an Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) that reports to the University Senate. The strength of our internal governance system, unfortunately, does not address the types of changes that can only be made nationally through concerted action by schools or conferences. We had hoped that COIA might be the vehicle for such action, but find that it is no longer effective and that the benefits of continued membership are outweighed by the reputational cost of maintaining affiliation.

After consultation with the FARs, the chair of the FAOIAC and IAC, the former University of Minnesota representative to COIA and 14-year steering committee member Gary Engstrand, and President Kaler, the FCC voted unanimously to recommend disaffiliation from COIA on April 6, 2017.