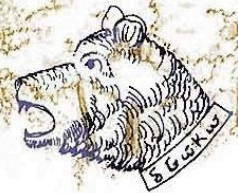


Order of the Golden Bear



The topic of tonight's discussion concerned Athletics, especially the student-athlete experience.

This discussion came after the release of the Chancellor's Academic Task Force's report in September, which was formed after reports of low graduation rates in Football and Men's Basketball and made many recommendations to improve academic success and community climate for student-athletes.

Some student Fellows who are not athletes noted that they found through personal experience that had been difficult to interact with student-athletes when student-athletes from the same team made up a vast majority of a dorm floor or they are placed at different CalSOs, both spaces that are typically designed to facilitate community interaction. A Fellow also noted that even a coach used attending events used faculty and other students as a form of punishment. Some Fellows pointed out that the Academic Task Force has recommended CalSO to be integrated and football head coach Sonny Dykes has implemented a program to integrate his players in dorm suites to help facilitate their acclimation on campus given their packed schedules.

Many Fellows suggested that the campus community should be careful when speaking about Athletics and not wrap the department into just Football and Men's Basketball. There are now 30 varsity teams on campus and many teams are doing well both academically and athletically, and many coaches are helping facilitate the development of their players. Fellows submitted that the Memorial Stadium debt report has improved as we plan to use our newly projected College Football Playoff revenue to service the debt while other schools are using that money for student programs, coaches' salaries, new construction, and more. Some Fellows pointed to poor representation of the Athletics on behalf of the University in pursuing sponsors, including the addition of the Party Safe at Cal to a Coors Light/Cal billboard along a local interstate while other Fellows counted that logo addition came at the Vice Chancellor level and many of the details of these deals are not in direct control of Cal Athletics.

Although many have looked to poor graduation rates in recent reports, some Fellows noted it is important to remember that the real goal is that students have an enriching educational experience and that graduating athletes does not mean that they are having that enriching experience. Fellows pointed to many athletes not being able to major in fields that they would

want to pursue and, especially since most student-athletes will not compete in their sports professionally, we should not pigeonhole their futures by limiting their academic choices. While some Fellows wondered why many professional athletes who went to Berkeley do not give back to the University, other Fellows posited that these former student-athletes may believe that they have already done extraordinary service to the University, they did not have an enriching experience while on campus, or, even worse, felt unwelcomed or uncomfortable due to interactions with faculty, staff, or other students. Some Fellows also suggested the value of the student-athlete experience for the workforce, as student-athletes 40 percent of the Goldman Sachs internship program for example.

Some Fellows stated that Athletics is included in the campus community and should be treated as such rather than an outside entity, and others should understand that it is an enriching aspect of the University. One Fellow also pointed to the interesting aspect of analyzing the financial model of Athletics, as we would not do so as much with say the English department, showing some difference between their perceived values. Some Fellows challenged people to find a better facilitation of community events and organization than Athletics and noted how sports and other extracurricular activities can be the best courses and coaches can be the best teachers at the University. Many Fellows called for the improvement of faculty/student-athlete interactions, as one Fellow mentioned that they feel uncomfortable mentioning that they are a student-athlete, only one professor has supported their athletic endeavors, and has been intimidated by professors about bad grades or needing to drop a course. In all, many Fellows promoted the theme of belonging and inclusion within the campus community for student-athletes and Athletics staff that applies to everyone at the University.