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Sr. Grace Mary Flickinger, S.B.S. Steps Down as Faculty Athletics Representative at Xavier After 36 Years

Dr. Elliot Hammer Named New FAR

New Orleans LA – Sister Grace Mary Flickinger, S.B.S., who achieved National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Hall of Fame status for her service on the local, regional, and national level while serving as Xavier University of Louisiana’s faculty athletics representative (FAR), is stepping down from that position after 36 years according to XU President Reynold Verret.

Flickinger, a member of the XULA biology faculty since 1968, continues as a professor in the Department of Biology. Verret has appointed Dr. Elliott Hammer, a longtime member of the Department of Psychology, as Flickinger’s successor as FAR.

"Sister Grace Mary has admirably served Xavier University of Louisiana, our athletics department, the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (GCAC), and the NAIA with untiring devotion in this important position," Verret said. "We are grateful for her many decades of service, her passion and devotion to our student-athletes, and the integral role she has played in the progress of athletics at Xavier."

In the structure of the NAIA, faculty representatives oversee the welfare of the student-athlete, certify eligibility, and ensure the emphasis of academics in university athletics. In the GCAC, the vote of faculty representatives is a crucial step toward ratification of new policies and procedures. Xavier currently fields intercollegiate teams in men’s and women’s basketball, cross country, track and field, and tennis, as well as women’s volleyball.

A New Jersey native, Flickinger has been a member of XULA’s biology department since 1968 and joined XU’s athletics committee in 1981. A few years later, she took on responsibilities as academic counselor for athletics at the request of former men’s basketball coach Denny Alexander. She also has served the GCAC as president for two terms (1990-91 and 1995-99), vice president, faculty athletics representative, and on its eligibility and executive committees. On the national level she chaired the NAIA’s Council of Faculty Athletics Representatives.

Flickinger was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame in 1998, and in 2007 she received the NAIA’s Wally Schwartz Award for her work as a faculty athletics representative.

Flickinger, who also served for several years as coordinator of advising, has been a long-time proponent of one-on-one advising and nurturing of all students, not only for their smooth transition to Xavier as freshmen but also for their persistence and degree completion, as well as their spiritual growth. Having earned a reputation as tough, but fair, she remains a favorite among alumni.

Hammer, who holds the John LaFarge Endowed Professorship in Social Justice, has served at Xavier for 16 years (including seven as Chair of the Psychology Department). His honors include the Visionary Leader Award and Model Institutions of Excellence mentor award, both from Xavier.

He will assume the duties of FAR this spring.

"Advising students has always been one of my favorite parts of my job, so I'm really looking forward to working more closely with student-athletes to help them achieve their academic and athletic goals", said Hammer.

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Sister Grace Mary Flickinger, SBS



Dr. Elliott Hammer