

On Monday afternoon, Coach Jeremy Warren, Dr. Mark Maneval and I met with the Football Team. For more than an hour I listened to our athletes' questions, suggestions and perspectives regarding my intent to close the program.

The members of the football team were passionate and professional. Anyone affiliated with the team would have been proud to observe their behavior.

A common theme in this discussion was a request for one more season of football. The men explained that one additional season would fulfill the promise made by Coach Warren when he recruited them to the college, and also, position the athletes to complete their education at RVC. As a group they pledged to support each other in maintaining or establishing academic eligibility to play football in the fall.

On Tuesday morning Jeremy, Mark and I discussed the feasibility of one more football season. Coach Warren clearly knows the challenges that accompany this opportunity and he accepts this responsibility. Jeremy is confident that he can field a competitive team. Dr. Maneval has pledged his active involvement in helping Jeremy to accomplish his goals.

While I continue to believe that RVC is better off closing the football program and using the resources allocated to it to strengthen other aspects of our athletic program, I also acknowledge the promise that we have made to our current football players, especially those who are committed to academic achievement. Thus, it is appropriate that we offer one additional football season, prior to dropping football as an intercollegiate sport.

The Board Report for our April meeting will recommend the following. "Effective December 1, 2009, the Board of Trustees drop football from the sports offered at Rock Valley College. It is also recommended that the Board of Trustees authorize a thorough review of all intercollegiate athletic programs, culminating in the development of an intercollegiate strategic plan that will promote athletic competitiveness, academic achievement and community connection."

If the Board approves this recommendation, Dr. Maneval will organize a task force, under the direction of Dr. Diane Nyhammer to develop an intercollegiate strategic athletic plan, as part of the academic plan. This plan will incorporate the dollars previously assigned to football to meet the objectives of athletic competitiveness, academic achievement and community connection.

I have heard and considered all of the comments and feedback I have received. Thank you for them.

Dr. Jack Becherer
President, Rock Valley College