

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ATHLETICS COMMITTEE**

Thursday, March 1, 2007; 9:00 a.m.
Knapp Room
225 Franklin Street – 33rd Floor
Boston, Massachusetts

Committee Members Present: Chair Carlin; Chair Tocco; Trustees Braceras, Endich, Lawton and Makrez; Vice Chair Manning

Committee Member Absent: Vice Chair MacAfee; Trustee Sheridan

University Administration: President Wilson; Executive Vice President Julian; General Counsel Bench; Vice President Motley; Chancellor MacKenzie; Athletic Director Skinner; Alumni Director Goodhue

Chair Carlin convened the meeting at 9:09 a.m. and announced the topic of today's meeting: the **Men's Ice Hockey Program on the Lowell Campus**. Chair Carlin began his report by commenting on the need to consider this issue from a student athlete's perspective. This Committee is faced with the tough issue of considering the fate of the Hockey Program on the Lowell campus but is confident the right decision will be made.

Chair Carlin thanked Chancellor MacKenzie and Athletic Director Skinner for their candor and straight forward approach with this issue at the last meeting of the Committee.

Chancellor MacKenzie believed there was some confusion involved at the last meeting of the Committee held on January 31, and he wanted to make it clear his belief that this is the wrong time to drop or change the Hockey Team.

Athletic Director Skinner also stressed the fact that he did not bring an agenda to the last meeting, but had intended only to furnish an honest summary of the facts; no decisions were made and none recommended. While the Program has had a few tough years, the practical solution would be to wait until the end of the season to start discussing change.

Mr. Skinner also noted that no school in Hockey East can survive without the support at the highest level; the Lowell campus will need the support of the new Chancellor expected to arrive in the near future. He again stressed that no recommendation was made at the last meeting. It was also noted that a \$1.5M deal has been made with Pepsi and that we need to work on the Title IX gap.

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Chair Carlin did not recall a request for the Hockey Team to play another season at the last meeting or that we wait for the new Chancellor. Chair Tocco remarked that at that meeting he had stated his desire not to talk about the Hockey Team however, Mr. Skinner indicated that the subject was a priority so the discussion was held.

Chair Tocco listed the five issues he took away from the last meeting: 1) the Hockey Program is losing money; 2) losing money will impact the other sports teams; 3) there is not a lot of enthusiasm being shown by the campus or the community for the program; 4) coach's discussion: can we be competitive?; 5) what is our return on investment?

Trustee Braceras reported that the Title IX issues are a factor when considering the Hockey Program. Although male and female participation rates at UMASS Lowell are about proportionate to enrollment, money spent on men's athletic programs far exceeds that spent on women's programs. This is primarily because of Division 1 Hockey. Trustee Braceras stressed, however, that although proportionality can be a legal safe harbor under Title IX, strict proportionality is not required. Being out of proportion does not necessarily mean we are out of compliance. The Lowell campus is making strides to close the gap and the Pepsi deal could help.

Trustee Braceras concluded that, although Title IX will certainly play a role in any decision about men's Division 1 Hockey at UMASS Lowell, it is not likely to be dispositive.

Chair Carlin stressed his belief that this discussion is not about eliminating the hockey program but providing a better situation for the athletes on the Lowell campus. Discussion also included the possibility of creating a much better situation for the hockey team including the consideration of other alternatives that would make the team more competitive.

Trustee Makrez, speaking as a student on the Lowell campus, shared her thoughts on the need for a strong sports program on campus which is a major factor in providing school spirit.

President Wilson commended Chancellor MacKenzie and Mr. Skinner and the Committee for their dedication to this subject. We must look at the costs and expenses to determine if this is a program worth saving. If we can't have a winning team we may need to move on.

The Committee members then debated the right way to proceed; would a new Chancellor want to be involved with this decision or would he prefer having it taken care of before his appointment.

It was then suggested that a Task Force be formed that would include Trustees, members of the Lowell campus and President's Office staff. The Task Force would study several issues including a Business Plan, where the Tsongas Arena fits in, and the Title IX issues. The Task Force would report back to this Committee who would then report back to the Board with the facts as well as different options.

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It was then moved, seconded and

VOTED: To recommend that the Board take the following action:

To establish a Task Force to review the Men's Ice Hockey Program on the Lowell campus and to report back to the Athletics Committee with their findings. (Doc. T07-027)

The Committee postponed the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on March 21 to give the Task Force time to analyze the situation, a new meeting date to be determined. President Wilson indicated that he would discuss the Hockey Program with the candidates for the Chancellor's position and ascertain their preference for handling this issue.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Barbara F. DeVico
Secretary to the Board of Trustees