

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

AMHERST•BOSTON•DARTMOUTH•LOWELL•WORCESTER

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ATHLETICS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 27, 2007; 7:00 a.m.
Amherst Room
225 Franklin Street – 33rd Floor
Boston, Massachusetts

Committee Members Present: Chair Carlin; Vice Chair MacAfee; Trustees Braceras, Endich and Lawton; Chairman Tocco; Vice Chair Sheridan

University Administration: President Wilson; General Counsel Bench; Executive Vice President Julian; Vice President and Chancellor-elect Motley; Alumni Director Goodhue; Chancellor Lombardi; Athletic Directors McCutcheon, Titus, Goodrum and Skinner; Mr. Connolly, Associate Vice President for University Relations and Communications; Ms. Granese, Associate Vice President for Marketing

Chair Carlin convened the meeting at 7:10 a.m. and asked for a motion to **Consider the Minutes of the Prior Meeting of the Committee.** Vice Chair Sheridan asked for an amendment to the minutes by adding the following paragraph to page 4:

“He went on to suggest that the focus of the Athletics Committee is far narrower than what is required to run a campus. Trustee Braceras respectfully disagreed by pointing out the other academic and financial areas of responsibilities of the Board of Trustees”.

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the April 6, 2007 meeting of the Committee, as amended.

The next item was the **Chair’s Report.** Chair Carlin thanked the Committee members, Vice President Motley, William Wright and Robert Goodhue for working with us on many of today’s issues. He indicated that this Committee intends to listen to the issues and work towards achieving positive solutions.

The situation at the Lowell campus involving Men’s Ice Hockey resulted in positive results due to the hard work of the Lowell Campus, the Task Force and the members of this Committee. It would be helpful to this Committee if each campus identify their issues with complete candor.

Chair Carlin indicated that he has been reading minutes from past meetings and the Division 1-A Football Program at Amherst has been a topic of interest for many years. There are many issues to consider, some that will be addressed at today’s meeting: a possible move into the Big

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East, the use of Gillette Stadium, etc. The Baseball issue at UMASS Boston is another issue that had been of concern in the past. This Committee should decide one way or another to resolve some of these issues.

The next item was the **President's Report**. President Wilson thanked Chair Carlin for his leadership, Chairman Tocco and the members of this Committee for their diligence. He also thanked Vice President Motley for his excellent service working with the Trustees and the University staff to advance the goals of this Committee.

This Committee has worked diligently over the past year and it has achieved measurable results that will make a difference for the Lowell Campus and the system. This Committee with the Task Force took on an issue with some controversy, listened to all sides working with the Athletic Director, the Interim and Incoming Chancellors and the University leaders to come up with a recommendation that will save the University thousands of dollars.

After a thorough review lead by Vice Chair Sheridan and the Task Force made recommendations that will enable the Lowell Division 1 Men's Hockey program to continue through next season. The recommendations included:

- A one-year re-negotiation of the University's current lease with the Tsongas Arena;
- A fundamental reordering of contractual and financial arrangements concerning use of Tsongas Arena;
- And, changes in the issuing of scholarships in a manner that will result in more balanced recruitment of players, in order to have the hockey team achieve at a consistent level, year-to-year.

Two weeks ago, the Lowell City Council approved the concessions requested which include the retaining of 100% of the food and beverage revenues from the 17 home games and the elimination of the University's annual \$50,000 payment to the arena.

President Wilson then reported that Associate Vice President Granese will make a presentation of the University-wide Athletics web site that will include information and schedules from each campus.

The UMASS sports teams have had a very good year. Our teams were 4th and 9th in Hockey East. The Amherst football team was just shy of the national championship in their division and the Amherst basketball team did well in the NIT Tournament. The Dartmouth Lacrosse team did well and competed in tennis at the Little East Conference Championships; four out of five of Lowell's spring teams, softball, baseball and men and women's track and field, advanced to the NCAA Tournaments or championships. At UMASS Boston many of the campus baseball and softball players were named to all-conference teams.

President Wilson reported on future issues including the feasibility of Division 1 Women's Hockey at UMASS Amherst and the goal of bringing in students, alumni and faculty into the seats at athletic events across the campuses.

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The next item was the **Vice President's Report**. Vice President Motley thanked the members of the Committee for their support and acknowledged the work of his staff, noting the work of Leslie Granese compiling information for the **Common Web Site**.

Ms. Granese introduces Jeff Connors and Chris Mathison; both worked on today's presentation. Some of the highlights included:

- there are 72 varsity sports across the UMASS system; each campus has their own web site;
- there is little athletic information on the 'home' site;
- the goals of this common web site include 1) provide Trustees a system-wide athletics web section, 2) enhance information about athletics on the UMASS system web site, 3) compile information from all four campuses, 4) increase visibility of and support for varsity athletic events.

We would like to begin Phase I by the Fall which will include the validation of the concept, aggregate the team schedules and results, spotlight student athletes and engage with campuses about shared needs.

The second Phase would include a more full featured site, increased campus integration and shared platform, ability for greater revenue and an initiative that can dovetail with the online alumni community and other athletic promotions and merchandising.

The Committee then saw several proposed mock ups of the Phase I schedule and calendar pages as well as a student athlete profile page and a Phase II main page.

Chair Carlin asked Mr. Robert Connolly and the Public Relations department to be a part of this project and share this information with the media.

Athletic Director Skinner inquired about the time table for Phase II. Ms. Granese responded that working with the Group we would hope to have it ready pretty quickly. Trustee Sheridan asked if the Group was working with the Campus Athletic Directors; Ms. Granese indicated the talks are in the beginning stages. Mr. Skinner stressed the need to begin the Phase II portion as soon as possible.

Chairman Tocco talked about the ability to watch campus sports live on line and what a difference that makes to alumni to keep involved. The Committee agreed that this was a good first step and that the Group continues to work on this project and have it up and running for this Fall.

The next item was a **Report from the Amherst Campus**. Athletic Director McCutcheon reported for the Amherst campus. He highlighted the success of the Amherst basketball team reaching the post season for the first time in 9 years. One of the current issues that need to be addressed is the updating of the Mullins Center. We must improve services and are currently in discussion to develop a "Champion Center". A new and improved facility would possibly

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include an indoor track. Depending on the scope of the Center, the potential costs range from \$15 to \$75 million.

Vice Chair Sheridan questioned if the Champion Center and the Recreation Center were two different issues in which Mr. McCutcheon responded yes, we must bring the Athletic Department together; it is currently divided between the Mullins Center and Boyden which creates difficulty in creating a cohesive department. We are planning to have a preliminary plan for the Champion Center within the next month.

Chair Carlin asked how this will affect the baseball issue. Mr. McCutcheon indicated that the current idea would be to locate the Champion Center near the location of the Baseball Field; the engineers are currently studying several location issues such as wetland, etc.

Trustee Braceras inquired as to what sports would be housed in the Champion Center; Mr. McCutcheon responded that basketball would still be the main event but could possibly house the offices for the coaches, locker and weight rooms and marketing offices. The individual sports teams would remain in their current active facility. The pool would stay in the Boyden Building but we could possibly add a pool to the Recreation Center in the future.

Trustee Braceras then addressed the issue of Women's Ice Hockey at UMASS Amherst. A feasibility study sent to the Committee confirmed the fact that women's ice hockey is one of the fastest growing sports for women in the northeast region. Female hockey players at public high schools in Massachusetts comprise 23% of the national total, and the sport is growing in Massachusetts at a rate of approximately 6% per year. UMASS and URI remain the only New England flagships without a women's hockey team. On the other hand, the creation of a Division I women's program would be costly and would create significant space and facilities issues.

Trustee Braceras stated that the next step is for the campus to determine whether the hurdles presented in the feasibility study can be overcome with some long-range, strategic planning. Chairman Tocco agreed with Trustee Braceras and expressed his view that we need to make a decision (sooner rather than later) whether to move forward with developing a program or put it to bed. Chairman Tocco noted that there is great talent in the area, and if we don't act soon we will lose the recruiting battle.

Mr. McCutcheon indicated that the Mullins Center may not be equipped for this team and that the Champion Center would help with this obstacle. Chair Carlin and members of the Committee indicated they would like a decision on this initiative within the year and that the Amherst campus consider alternative venues. Trustee Braceras noted that the objective of Title IX is to *expand* opportunities for women and that it would be a perversion of the statute to say that we cannot add a women's team because male and female facilities will not be equitable in the short term.

Trustee Braceras and the Committee members agreed that this issue should be studied by a Task Force similar to the Lowell Ice Hockey Task Force. Chairman Tocco said he's been talking about this issue for seven years while Vice Chair Sheridan stated the need to make this

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work. There was a discussion about appointing Trustee Braceras as Chair of the Task Force which is something she would need to consider before making a commitment.

It was moved, seconded and

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

To establish a Task Force to review the Women's Ice Hockey Program on the Amherst campus and to report back to the Athletics Committee with their findings.

Chancellor Lombardi reported on the status of the Recreation Center. Everything is on schedule; we are in the process of completing the bidding process; we expect to break ground on the facility in late October with a Spring of 2007 opening. This is a \$50 million project and we have been in touch with the Governor regarding the funding. There will also be discussion with the Building Authority; we will need to plead our case while remembering the other University building funding requests.

Vice Chair Sheridan asked about the limit of funds; Chancellor Lombardi indicated that the state will subsidize \$52-53 million while we will have to raise the balance which we will not do by raising fees.

The next item was a discussion about Elevating Men's Football on the Amherst campus. Chairman Tocco began the discussion by indicating that this is another issue that needs to be finalized one way or another. There are many advantages to changing the status including the branding initiative, the bringing together of the alums and conference revenue. The Kraft family has indicated their interest in helping us with marketing. There is also a chance that we could have one team that would represent the entire University.

It was suggested that we establish a Task Force to study this issue led by Trustee MacAfee.

It was moved and seconded.

Mr. McCutcheon cautioned the Committee that while we may have a product in place, there are other issues to consider such as the facility issue. Trustee Braceras asked that the Task Force include student trustees so that they could discuss the impact of playing off campus. Trustee Endich didn't think students would travel to Gillette stadium and would rather have their own campus team.

Professor O'Connor, Faculty Representative from the Amherst campus stated that there are more adult fans than students at football games. Students are more likely to attend hockey games. He also indicated that faculty on the Amherst campus are strong in their beliefs regarding the "250 Plan" and that money for the Plan is a higher priority than the football team. He suggested the Task Force include members of the Faculty. He also voiced concern that student athletes are getting harder and harder to educate and this is a nationwide concern.

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Mr. McCutcheon indicated that currently there are 63 football scholarships on the Amherst campus.

The Committee moved to the **Report from the Boston Campus**. Mr. Titus, Vice Chancellor for Athletics and Recreation reported on the status of the Baseball Complex. We had been in talks with BC High about a shared field which BC was reluctant to take on. Out going Chancellor Michael Collins had asked that this issue be studied further; incoming Chancellor Motley agreed that the discussion on this issue will continue.

Mr. Titus reported that his department is currently working on a three year plan that deals with the hiring of full time coaches. We have implemented drug testing and upgraded study hall habits. The sports teams have improved and the strategic plan includes the problem of serious facility issues.

Ms. Louise Goodrum, Interim Athletic Director gave the **Report from the Dartmouth Campus** and indicated an outside consultant has been hired to study the future of the athletics programs. Trustee Braceras asked that the report be forwarded to the Committee members once completed. The recreation center would be part of the strategic plan with an estimated \$3 million in costs for the addition of a second floor to the building.

Trustee Endich indicated that currently the Center is overcrowded and is a high priority on campus. Vice Chair Sheridan asked for a motion to stress the importance of this issue.

It was moved, seconded and

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

That the Committee on Athletics go on record to make the issue of the Recreation Center on the Dartmouth campus a high priority.

There was a discussion about the importance of athletic facilities in terms of recruiting quality students and the selling point with potential students on campus tours.

Chair Carlin asked about the status of Men's Golf, Swimming and Water Polo. Ms. Goodrum indicated that water polo never got off the ground but that golf and swimming were current programs on the campus.

Vice Chair Sheridan then discussed the **Work of the Men's Ice Hockey Task Force at UMASS Lowell**. There was a lot of hard work involved shared by the Task Force, Chairman Tocco, President Wilson and Congressman Meehan. It was noted that while the Task Force had tackled a tough issue with positive results, incoming Chancellor Martin Meehan indicated there was still a lot of work to be done.

We need people to fill the seats of the Hockey games and will revisit the Hockey program again next year. Mr. Skinner, Athletic Director from Lowell thanked everyone that worked on this project and agreed there was more work to be done. There are several ideas about attracting

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people to the games including handing out T-shirts and focusing on a Club Seating Program. These seats have been turned over to the Lowell campus and we have currently sold 298 of them creating revenue of \$100,000.

New uniforms have been designed and will be ready for the fourth game of the season. Chancellor Meehan has many ideas and is excited about taking them on.

Chair Carlin then returned to the issues of the Amherst campus and thanked Mr. McCutcheon for his patience and indicated he could continue to listen to his concerns.

It was then

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

To establish a Task Force to review the Men's Football program on the Amherst campus and to report back to the Athletics Committee with their findings.

The Committee agreed the Task Force should include an independent member and that they continue to talk to the Krafts. Vice Chair Sheridan and Chairman Tocco agreed that the goal was to improve matters using the Lowell Ice Hockey program as an example.

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Barbara F. DeVico
Secretary to the Board of Trustees