

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST•BOSTON•DARTMOUTH•LOWELL•WORCESTER

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ATHLETICS COMMITTEE**

Friday, September 12, 2008; 8:00 a.m.
Resource Options, Inc.
200 Highland Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts

Committee Members Present: Chair Carlin; Trustees Braceras, Koffman, Lawton and Thomas

Committee Members Absent: Vice Chair MacAfee; Trustee Endich, Karam and Tocco

University Administration: Chancellor Meehan; Mr. Skinner, Director of Athletics, UMASS Lowell; Mr. Day, Athletic Director, Vice Chancellor Kim, UMASS Dartmouth; Mr. Wright, Director of Public Information

Chair Carlin convened the meeting at 8:06 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Today's meeting will provide an opportunity to hear from the Athletic Directors about recent activities and key initiatives facing each campus. We are now in the process of scheduling a meeting of the Committee in the near future to discuss compliance-related issues.

The first item on the agenda was the **Athletic Director's Report, UMASS Lowell**. Mr. Skinner, Director of Athletics on the Lowell campus distributed a report highlighting several issues. Some of the highlights included:

- the 2007-2008 NCAA Division II Report has been issued – the New England 10 Conference is one of the best in the country with high graduation rates, a successful student advisory group and effective fund raisers;
- there are currently improvements being made to the Bellegarde Boathouse;
- last year's See You at the Tsongas Campaign received the NACMA Gold Medal.

There was a discussion about the success of the Lowell Hockey team; it has provided marketing opportunities and helped to bring the community together. Currently, we are looking at ways to provide better financial arrangements with the Tsongas Arena.

At Trustee Braceras' suggestion the hockey team uniforms now say "UMASS".

Chancellor Meehan reported that the UMass brand is growing; attendance at the hockey games is growing; while the Arena seats 6500, we employ members of the Women's soccer team to cover 2500 seats before every game to help move everyone together. Chancellor Meehan indicated that it would have made more sense to have made a smaller venue with 4500 seats.

Athletics Committee
September 12, 2008

The larger number of seats was required by the American Hockey League, whose Devils play their home games in the arena. Ultimately, winning fills the seats.

Part of the **Key Initiatives on the Lowell Campus** involves the Bellegarde Boathouse. We have a \$1 million allocation from the state for renovation of the Boathouse. The DCR budget has \$2.5 million proposed for the Boathouse. We intend to elevate the Women's Crew to varsity status which brings us to full compliance with Title IX. The University has an interest in better utilizing the Merrimack River with the scenic view of it from the campus. Transforming the Boathouse will contribute to that goal. The facility will be managed by a full-time head crew coach, Veronica Platzer from the University of Michigan, who was a national champion in crew at the University of Virginia.

Other projects include the CBS-TV website that is part of a system-wide effort to provide a web image; this site will serve as a site for all UMass athletic programs. In a commitment to sports and social change, students will be selected to assist efforts to engage the community making presentations and conducting panel discussions to explore issues connecting sports and society.

Special promotions coming up include: on November 22 we play Northeastern University which will include a Lincoln Bobble Head doll, information about Vice Presidential candidate Benjamin Butler, a touring Lincoln Bus, a Bucket Boys show and a disco night.

There was more discussion regarding the Boathouse. Chancellor Meehan discussed his plan to market the boathouse and Crew team which is part of the University's strategic plan which could also provide a "naming opportunity".

There was a brief discussion about the plan to negotiate a new partnership with the Lowell Spinners and a plan to bring the parties together to utilize the full potential of the Ball Park. Chair Carlin noted his company's enthusiasm for attending Spinner's games.

The Chair then announced the Committee would enter Executive Session to consider a **Real Estate Acquisition**. Following the Session, the Committee would return to Open Session.

It was then moved, seconded and

VOTED: To enter into **Executive Session** for the purpose of considering a **Real Estate Acquisition**.

Chair Carlin voted for the motion as did Trustees Braceras, Lawton and Thomas.

The time was 8:46 a.m.

At 9:14 a.m. the Committee returned to Open Session.

The next item on the agenda was the **Athletic Director's Report, UMASS Dartmouth**. Mr. Day presented an Overview of Recent Activities including an evaluation of athletic staff,

Athletics Committee
September 12, 2008

surveying students about their views. He stated that he has done a lot of traveling with teams to observe them. Currently there are 23 teams and one athletic building. While the ice hockey teams have proven successful, they have one part-time coach stationed in one of the worst facilities in New England.

It was the consensus of the athletic staff that we need more community spirit and excitement which boils down to the recruitment of better players, a tactic that was successful with Coach Doc Rivers and this year's World Champions Boston Celtics.

Trustee Braceras noted the discussion at a prior meeting of this Committee about needing to focus on fewer teams. Fewer games would mean better attendance. If we are unable to expand the financial pie, we must consolidate our resources.

Mr. Day indicated that teams are doing better. We had an undefeated basketball team that was filling the gym; we have also instituted special promotions; all of our teams had winning seasons; the first football game of the season had the largest crowd in school history. (The first game under lights.)

Vice Chancellor Kim reported that they are currently assessing the situation; they have hired a consultant to report on consolidation; Trustee Braceras requested a copy of the Report. They have expanded the Tripp Fitness Center hours and added new equipment. Some fitness equipment has been placed in dormitory common areas.

Chair Carlin indicated that there are two issues on the table: the Fitness Center and the number of athletic teams. These issues have been front and center for the past 18 months. Can we make the tough decisions? While it is hard to cut programs sometimes it is necessary.

Trustee Braceras indicated that this Committee had asked for a consolidation plan in the past and expects steps to be taken to address the situation.

Mr. Day, while not aware of this request responded that some of these issues have been addressed.

Vice Chancellor Kim stated that trimming the sports programs presents a challenge in regards to union contracts. Chair Carlin asked that the Chancellor be brought into the discussion.

Trustee Braceras stated that it is better to have a stellar reputation for a few teams than be average in many.

Chair Carlin reminded the Committee that student Trustee Endich had talked often of the need to address the athletic facility problem and make that a priority.

Mr. Ian reported that they are currently making coaches accountable for their recruiting efforts. Webcasting can be used as a tool and does not cost anything. They are also in the process of changing the logo which has tested well. They have recruited an excellent track and field coach which should show result in a vast improvement in team success in two years' time.

Athletics Committee
September 12, 2008

Chair Carlin reiterated the need for fewer teams and more full time coaches and wanted to go on record as making Trustees available to support these initiatives and help in any way possible.

Vice Chancellor Kim and Mr. Day agreed to follow the mandate to reduce programs but be allowed to choose which programs. They are studying the issue and will come back to the Committee with a progress report and ask for help, if needed.

Mr. Day also mentioned the infrastructure feasibility study exploring such issues as building a new recreational facility or expanding the Fitness Center. The campus is working on a vision and a series of goals. Vice Chancellor Kim thanked the Committee for their interest and their support.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Barbara F. DeVico
Secretary to the Board of Trustees