

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**AMHERST-BOSTON-DARTMOUTH-LOWELL-WORCESTER**

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

**Friday, April 6, 2007, 8:00 a.m.**  
**Resource Options, Inc.**  
**200 Highland Avenue**  
**Needham, Massachusetts**

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Carlin, Vice Chair MacAfee, Vice Chair Sheridan, Trustees Braceras, Lawton and Makrez

**Committee Members Absent:** Trustees Chairman Tocco, Trustee Endich

**University Administration:** Vice President Motley, Chancellor Lombardi, UMass Amherst Athletic Director McCutcheon, Alumni Director Goodhue and Director of Public Information Wright

Chair Carlin convened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. He began by thanking President's Office staff members for their support of the Committee.

He said that the Trustees are interested in achieving excellence in NCAA competition and the goal is to listen to each campus. Candor is important because discussing important issues can affect change.

Chancellor Lombardi began the discussion, stating that the University of Massachusetts has a long tradition in athletics. The program is not perfect but there has been success in several sports. There have been three years of changes. Business and support services have been restructured, along with sports medicine. The new business efficiency approach has allowed money to be moved to other places in the department. There has been a 50 percent increase in traditional airline costs that has impacted the budget.

UMass Amherst Athletic Director McCutcheon gave an overview of the athletics programs at the campus. He said that there are 23 NCAA sports offered at UMass Amherst, 12 women's teams and 11 men's teams. Basketball is the lead sport and has the most opportunity to bring in more revenue.

UMass Amherst basketball, football, hockey and lacrosse teams have shown that they can be competitive nationally. (NIT participants in basketball, national championship finalists in IAA football and in lacrosse and participants in the NCAA hockey playoffs for the first time ever.) Other teams can be competitive regionally and in their respective

leagues. The recent weakness of the A-10 basketball league has been a problem in respect to how the UMass team is regarded.

The new track facility has been helpful for the track teams. There is still a significant need for additional funding for the athletics program.

What would be the effect of not having a baseball team?

The baseball program costs about \$400,000 per year and a lesser sport like skiing costs only \$30,000 per year. Contributions to baseball have been disappointing. Eliminating certain teams could save money and that might help with Title IX issues but - as Chancellor Lombardi pointed out - the campus administration provided a special appropriation of \$2.5 million to athletics during the periods of severe budget cuts. Any savings would likely be directed toward repaying that appropriation. There would be a net positive by cutting programs but it could not solve sports problems at a level of magnitude that will make a difference.

There is also a serious problem with aging athletics facilities on campus, such as Boyden Hall. There have been track facility improvements and a new "rug" placed on the football field but more needs to be done.

Trustee Sheridan asked whether the groundbreaking for the new recreation building for UMass Amherst would take place on schedule (June 21<sup>st</sup>). The budget for constructing the building is \$63 million and student fees have been collected for several years to help finance this building. Students were able to have input concerning what they want to have in the building (primarily fitness equipment). Chairman Carlin asked: "When will the shovel go into the ground?" The Building Authority is working closely with the campus administration and the staff has been very supportive and imaginative. Groundbreaking for the building will likely be held in the Fall with an opening date of Spring, 2009. Throughout the entire process, open meetings have been held with the students.

Chairman Carlin asked Chancellor Lombardi about a report that some information that the Romney Administration needed regarding the construction of the recreation building was delayed. Trustee Lawton said that the information was on time but the Romney Administration did not act on it expeditiously. The Chancellor indicated that he would investigate because if there was a flaw at the campus level he wanted it fixed.

Chairman Carlin also inquired about the possibility of reimbursing students for the fee that was charged to fund the Recreation Center.

Trustee Braceras raised the issue of the possible establishment of a women's ice hockey team at UMass Amherst.

AD McCutcheon said it would cost \$600K-\$800K to launch a women's hockey team to compete in Hockey East. Significant renovations would have to be made to locker

rooms and more office space would be needed. Such a move would also affect the campus's ability to offer ice time to local high school and youth hockey programs.

Chancellor Lombardi added that to create a women's ice hockey team UMass Amherst would have to eliminate some other sports and increase student athletics fees.

Trustee Braceras said that she believes a top Northeast university should have a women's ice hockey team.

Chancellor Lombardi said that UMass Amherst spends \$8 million on athletics each year and some faculty and students would oppose an increase in the expenditure of funds on athletics teams. The Chancellor was asked if there was a way to evaluate the top athletics programs in the country to determine how they were earning revenue.

He added that the top 10 public university flagship campuses have major sources of revenue and spend more than \$50 million on athletics each year, schools such as Ohio State University, the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina and the University of Florida. He said that it is a fantasy that UMass Amherst can be at a Florida or Ohio State level because the state does not provide enough money to support such a goal.

Chair Carlin noted that there isn't a top 10 public institution of higher education that does not have a big time athletics program.

Trustee Sheridan asked for comparative studies on how some of the larger public universities fund their athletics programs.

Trustee Lawton raised the issue of whether UMass Amherst should consider once again the issue of moving up to IA in football.

AD McCutcheon interjected that 25-30 college and university athletics programs nationally cover their costs each year, mentioning that schools such as Tennessee have revenue from a 100,000-seat football stadium.

He said that to move to IA football, UMass Amherst would have to consider three key issues:

- (1) In what league would you play?;
- (2) Where would you play physically – on campus or off campus?;
- and (3) What would be the operational costs?

He also noted that moving to IA football would have a significant effect on Title IX efforts on campus. IA football would require many more scholarships for male athletes.

AD McCutcheon said they would need to investigate the IA issue further but added that he had spoken with Big East Athletics Commissioner Mike Tranghese recently who

said that the league was not likely to add a Northeast team like UMass but would more likely pursue a team such as Penn State, if an addition was made.

Chancellor Lombardi cited the example of the University of Buffalo moving to IA football and how disastrous that move had been, both financially and in the results on the field.

Chairman Carlin stated that that may be the case but more recently Division I Football at UConn has had unprecedented success.

Chancellor Lombardi reminded everyone that the University has both an academic and athletics mission.

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.

Trustee Sheridan said that the Trustees have committed to a \$2.3 billion capital program that includes many new academic buildings.

Chancellor Lombardi mentioned that many alums want new sports programs for free and will not write personal checks to support them. At larger schools, controlling your boosters is the main problem.

AD McCutcheon said that UMass Amherst needs to build a “Championship Center,” possibly in the space where the baseball field is now located. A plan is being developed. Trustee Braceras asked how the Board Committee could help.

Chancellor Lombardi suggested that the focus should be on basketball – where UMass Amherst can excel on the national sports scene - and said that the recent overall weakness of the A-10 basketball league is a problem. It will take a lot of work to make basketball the premier sport within that league.

Question: Would you vote today for Division I football and women’s ice hockey? Athletic Director McCutcheon responded: “No. Unless it was resourced appropriately. I’d vote for it tomorrow if it was resourced appropriately.”

Trustee Sheridan said that he supports creating a women’s ice hockey team at UMass Amherst and Chancellor Lombardi said that a feasibility study should be done.

AD McCutcheon committed to conducting a women’s ice hockey study and to looking at the needs of the basketball program.

The full Board of Trustees meet at UMass Amherst on June 21<sup>st</sup> and the Athletics Committee meets on June 27<sup>th</sup>.

Trustee Sheridan moved that the Minutes of the previous two meetings (January 31 and March 1) be approved. Trustee Braceras seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

AD McCutcheon said that he would be making a report to the UMass Amherst Faculty Senate on April 9<sup>th</sup> concerning the IA football issue.

Chancellor Lombardi said that there is no current proposal to move to IA football.

The meeting was adjourned.

William Wright  
Director of Public Information