

DRAFT

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

AMHERST-BOSTON-DARTMOUTH-LOWELL-WORCESTER

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ATHLETICS COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, January 31, 2007; 8:00 a.m.
Resource Options, Inc.
200 Highland Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts**

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

Committee Members Absent: Trustee Lawton

University Administration: Trustees Chairman Tocco; Vice President Motley; Alumni Director Goodhue; Director of Public Information Wright; Chancellor MacCormack; Athletic Director Goodrum; UMass Dartmouth Director of Communications Hoey; Interim Chancellor MacKenzie; Athletic Director Skinner

Chair Carlin convened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

The committee is continuing the process of reviewing athletics programs at each campus. Today UMass Dartmouth and UMass Lowell chancellors and athletics directors were scheduled to meet separately with the committee.

UMass Dartmouth Chancellor Jean MacCormack noted that there are now four female presidents heading schools in UMass Dartmouth's league. Presidents of those institutions recently met with NCAA President Myles Brand who is constantly advocating for the creation of more college sports programs at all division levels. The chancellor said that the athletes on her campus are consistently among the highest achievers academically, as well.

UMass Dartmouth is engaged in a search for a new athletic director. Louise Goodrum is serving as Interim AD. She is not a candidate for the permanent position. UMass Dartmouth is also conducting a search for a new dean of students. The campus now has more residential students than commuters for the first time.

Recent sports-related renovations on campus include the installation of new turf on the football field and an \$800,000 upgrade of the swimming pool. Jeffrey Wolfman, in advancement, is seeking to increase fund-raising for UMass Dartmouth through alumni connected with athletics.

Interim AD Goodrum reported that UMass Dartmouth currently has 25 NCAA sports teams, 12 for men and 13 for women. The NCAA is considering making cheerleading and competitive dance a sport. UMass Dartmouth has won the national cheerleading title three times in recent years.

The campus fitness center is seeing a great deal of use and an expansion of the facility is being considered. Funding for an expansion would come - in part - from an increase in the student athletic fee. Trustee Tendich noted that she has had difficulty utilizing the facility at times because it is being used constantly by students.

BOT Chairman Tocco requested that UMass Dartmouth report on revenue streams from use of facilities such as the pool by outside community programs.

Chair Carlin questioned why so many sports are offered at UMass Dartmouth when so many larger colleges and universities, such as USC, field fewer NCAA sports teams. Interim AD Goodrum said that many of the sports teams are unique but have strong alumni support bases. Chancellor MacCormack added that there is no evidence that reducing the number of sports teams would actually save money.

A key issue for UMass Dartmouth is the goal of hiring full-time coaches. The campus is not meeting its Title IX goals. There are 318 male athletes on campus and 198 female athletes. BOT Chairman Tocco suggested that the school should focus on limiting the number of competitive sports teams available at UMass Dartmouth.

Chancellor MacCormack noted that Title IX focuses on the “opportunity” to participate on sports teams, not the actual number of female athletes on a campus. Track & field and swimming are the sports at UMass Dartmouth that have the greatest capacity for adding more female athletes.

Football, hockey and baseball are the most expensive sports programs on campus. Football costs \$90,000 annually and involves 91 athletes. The head football coach receives \$12,000 for a part-time position.

Trustee Braceras, who teaches law school courses on Title IX, was asked by Chairman Carlin to work with all four campuses in dealing with their Title IX issues.

Chancellor MacCormack noted the school spirit and community spirit value of sports programs like football and basketball that engage the entire community.

Vice Chair Sheridan inquired whether alumni are generous in giving to the sports programs and Interim AD Goodrum responded that giving tends to be sports-specific, with hockey and baseball receiving the greatest financial support from alumni. The most popular sports on campus are hockey and football. The school even has an equestrian team.

BOT Chairman Tocco stated that eliminating teams is tough but winning is what brings support, in fans and dollars. He suggested that a new hockey rink might be built by negotiating with a private developer.

Chancellor MacCormack listed the most pressing athletics issues as:

- Being able to pay for full-time coaches;
- Expansion of the Tripp Athletic Center, possibly by adding an additional floor; \$3-5 million for expansion; \$10-12 million for a new floor
- Lights for Track and Field;
- Legal issues concerning the soccer field inside the track (note: lawsuit was lost by UMass Dartmouth)
- Fitness center upgrades in the field house

UMass Dartmouth Chancellor MacCormack, Interim AD Goodrum and Director of Communications Hoey left the meeting.

UMass Lowell Interim Chancellor David Mackenzie and Athletic Director Dana Skinner joined the meeting.

Chairman Carlin said that the committee should dive right into the hockey issue at UMass Lowell. BOT Chairman Tocco noted that athletics is an important part of branding a university, just as winning a Nobel Prize is important in elevating the recognition of a university's academics. He believes that the large number of sports programs on UMass campuses is diffusing focus. Winning is what brings excitement in sports, at whatever division level. Playing in Hockey East, with its four perennial giants (BC, BU, UNH and Maine), makes it difficult for UMass Lowell to finish higher than fourth or fifth each year. Should UMass Lowell evaluate its hockey program to consider other options for competition?

Interim Chancellor MacKenzie said that UMass Lowell is in Division II in all sports except hockey. Their Division II Northeast 10 league is planning to add three more teams to bring the total number of teams to 10. UMass Lowell is one of only two public schools in the league; Southern Connecticut State is the other. Other members are schools such as Bentley, Assumption, St. Anselm's and Pace.

AD Skinner noted that UMass Lowell has won 37 conference championships and has had 54 NCAA Tournament wins in its history during his 20-year tenure there. He said that some of the private schools consider the public schools to be “more athletic” schools.

The Northeast 10 conference has the highest graduation rate of any Division II conference in the nation.

Chair Carlin asked Vice Chair Sheridan to be the committee’s liaison to UMass Lowell.

AD Skinner said that the campus is not in compliance with Title IX. More money must be shifted from men’s teams to women’s teams to achieve compliance. It’s a \$200,000 issue.

The hockey team uses Tsongas Arena and some Lowell city officials would like to see the University take over operation of the arena. Attendance for hockey games now is averaging about 3,000 fans per game. UMass Lowell spends \$1.1 million per year on the hockey program. Only Merrimack in Hockey East spends less than UMass Lowell on their hockey program. UMass Amherst spends much more. Many UMass Lowell players would not have come to the school if it was not in Hockey East.

BOT Chairman Tocco suggested that UMass campuses should be focusing on sports in which our teams can excel by qualifying for NCAA Tournaments, which has a branding value. Is funding UMass Lowell hockey at \$1.1 million a year worth it? In a different division, UMass Lowell could still play excellent teams such as BC and BU in out-of-conference games.

Chairman Carlin said he would hate to see hockey eliminated at UMass Lowell altogether. He believes that UMass Lowell could win a league championship in another Division I League.

BOT Chairman Tocco added that ticket sales is also an issue and that at a recent UMass Lowell/Providence game, 1,800 fans attended and it was the lowest rated hockey game in NESN broadcast history. He added that athletics does contribute to the quality of life for the community and the Tsongas Arena has been an important sports venue for the City of Lowell.

Chancellor Mackenzie noted that there would likely be pressure to retain Division I hockey at UMass Lowell. The school might consider returning football to its sports programs. He added that UMass Lowell recently signed a \$1 million deal with the Pepsi Cola Corporation.

AD Skinner said that the campus's key sports issues are:

- The hockey team's future; and
- Title IX compliance

BOT Chairman Tocco said that prioritizing is important when resources are limited.

AD Skinner said that they are aiming for athletic excellence and academic excellence at UMass Lowell.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

J. Keith Motley
Vice President for Business
And Public Affairs

