University of Massachusetts  
Athletic Council Committee Minutes  
February 27, 2015  
Recreation Center Conference Room

Committee Members Present:
R. Spencer, P. Vittum, E. Ward, R. Warnick  
Co-Chair N. Lacey, T. Anderson, S. Kolovson, D. Fellows

Guests:
K. Stefanoni, E. May, B. Markowski, J. Hopkins, S. Pearson, R. Goodhue, J. Balzano, T. Fay

Absent:
D. Barstow (excused), M. Borkhuis, A. Moore, JC Schnabl, N. Walker, L. Sharo, G. Richason

I. Call to Order
Co-Chair Nelson Lacey called the February 27, 2015 meeting of the Athletic Council to order at 11:33 a.m. and welcomed guest speaker, Coach Guests J. Balzano (Campus Planning), K. Stefanoni (Head Coach Softball), D. Markowski (Associate AD Facilities); J. Hopkins (Athletics SWA); and T. Fay (Sport Management, SUNY Cortland). Each council member and guest introduced themselves and their role to Athletics or the Council and guests. Nelson Lacey indicated that we have filled the two vacant faculty position with Nerfetti Walker from McCormack Sport Management Department and Libby Sharo from Political Science.

II. Approval of the Minutes of January 2015
Co-Chair Lacey opened the floor to discussion of the Athletic Council minutes from January 2015. There being no other discussion, it was so moved by Rebecca and seconded by Ed Ward to accept the motion to approve. All were in favor of approving the Minutes from the January 2015 meeting.

II. Meet the Coach: Kristi Stefanoni, Head Coach of Women’s Softball
Chair Nelson Lacey thanked Coach Stefanoni for speaking to the council and asked her to introduce herself comment on her season that is already underway despite the poor weather conditions. Coach Stefanoni indicated that this was her 10th season at UMass but her first as the Head Coach after being the Interim Head Coach in the previous year. Their current record is 4-5 compared to 2-7 a year ago. Coach is big on stats especially the team’s ERA. Coach discussed injuries on the team and their coping with key player injuries and how their goals are to qualify for the NCAAs. UMass will be hosting the A10 Tournament this year. Christine has two assistant coaches, Stacey Ramsey from University Alabama and Kaitlin Inglesby from University of Washington, who is serving as the Pitching Coach. Next big game will be against Louisville and the conference
home opener is slated for early April for a three game series. Currently the team has a 5 person pitching rotation and are looking forward to a home series.

Coach Stefanoni was taught by Coach Sortino to pay close attention to OB percentage, batting averages, K/W ratio and balances the team with run producing in the 1-4 position and a second lead-off hitter later in the line up. She indicated the best teams in the A10 this year will be Fordham, St. Joe's, and St. Louis and we are fortunate to play both Fordham and St. Joe’s at home this year. The overall conference RPI is pretty strong with Fordham holding the highest RPI in the 60s-60s with UMass about 20-30 points lower. She thinks that 1-2 teams form the A-10 will make the NCAA tournament field of 64 teams; so, it is important to win the A-10 and compete for the league championship. The powerhouse softball teams come from the Power Conference and included Florida, Alabama, Michigan and teams from the Pac 12 and Big 10. The top 16 teams at the end of the season will host a regional in the NCAAs. Coach Stefanoni spoke about her pitching staff and how Emma Menderocker was throwing better than expected have a serious and complicated surgery, but she is rebounding well.

When asked about a bubble for indoor practice, a structure would work wonders for their efforts especially this winter and spring. Coach will only bring the team outside if the temperatures reach into the 40s (those days are few and far between). Practicing in Boyden is tough on players’ knees and recovery time. She would prefer to get outside and wear cleats/spikes.

She is currently recruiting 4-5 players and all are left handed hitters including one strong Texas recruits. The incoming class of 2016 has six verbals, two from Texas and 2 from Massachusetts and 1 from Las Vegas. Pitching will be a priority in the class coming up from 2017. Big pluses included 50 days of recruiting in the summer through August and the opportunity now to recruit with the private schools due to the presence or the Honors College. Of her six recruits, five will be in the Honors College and she has take two recruits from Harvard. Regarding facility needs the indoor practice area would be a high priority, the ability to make Sortino Field an important community asset, and improvements to the practice area. She is pleased with the Adidas and Easton budgets for the teams and lights would be nice in extending play especially during tournaments.

III. The Bubble – An Indoor Practice Facility

Nelson Lacey indicated that the AC had taken the initiative to help create change and the Bubble had come up in the last AC meeting was also emphasized at the last meeting of the AC in 2014 when Coach Whipple visited the council. Ed Ward knows this is needed and John McCutcheon was generally concerned with the building and the related costs. In light of these needs, Joe Balzano from Campus Planning; Dan Markowski, Associate AD for Facilities and Ted Fay, Sports Facility Instructor from SUNY Cortland, a UMass graduate and Amherst resident were invited to speak to the issues of building an indoor facility – a bubble or fieldhouse complex.
Ted Fay lead the discussion as he teaches a graduate class on facility development and design and spoke to the issues his graduate students and he worked on in the previous year. Ted had met with all of the coaches and came up with three different options and their report shared with the AC included 30 pages of direct report on the topic and about 60 pages of Appendices including the examples from other schools and what the opportunity to big a structure here on campus might provide. The impending loss of the facility for tennis seems problematic however, the current location of the tennis courts makes that area perfectly suited for a small bubble to keep the tennis program active. Issues discussed currently included the practice times, temperature and injury issues and location, size and scope of the facility. T. Fay indicated that both Harvard and Yale have bubble structures and they each worked well in the current winter and wind weather challenges. The bubbles shed snow easily.

T. Fay indicated there are basically three different designs in the report – 1) standard field, but felt this structure would be too small; 2) an expanded field without a track; and 3) an expanded structure with an indoor track and designated practice areas. He felt the third option was the best choice as it made UMass a destination choice and the structure could be used year round with proper attention to energy consumption and location that would create value in the facility due to its size and scope. He felt that these air support facilities could be build as a turnkey facility for about $14.07 per square foot with attention to maximize a high R value in energy efficiency.

T. Fay also indicated that he and J. Dietz for the last month have also been taking to Boston 2024 and there exists the opportunity to bring a number of the games to UMass in 2014 and the valley including the sports of rowing, kayaking, cycling and some preliminary games for basketball and volleyball and the use of UMass facilities such as the Mullins Center and the Champions Center for games, practices and housing of Olympic Athletes. Upgrades and corporate sponsorship for upgrades to facilities might be possible if UMass is a destination site for 2024. Other issues discussed here included the athlete/student welfare for spring sports and the challenges of re-scheduling practices and the compression of practice times. The price points of a bubble appeared attractive and the facility would not be fancy but would have the potential for us to attract more revenue opportunities including summer tournaments and the games of the Olympics of 2024.

J. Balzano indicated that the bubble structure is not currently on the radar of new facilities. He indicated that the facility would need to get support to move it up the priority chain and critical would be the understanding of the need for the facility and how it fits into the other needs with the support of the administration and the Capital Assets Board. He also discuss that the turnkey building would be ideal, but that pricing might also have to consider various multipliers due to prevailing wage scales for public building construction. He also commented on the support facility and storage space if the building was only up for seasonal periods. J. Balzano also discussed the site utility costs near the stadium, that eventually the stadium would improvements and would need more work going forward to increase seating and support facilities for fan services. He felt it
should be important to consider this and other facilities in the overall Campus Master Plan.

Discussions also commented on the addition to the Rec Center and the need for two new turf fields – one for field hockey and another for lacrosse and field improvements at Gladchuck and Garber Fields.

Additional questions focus on the Olympics 2024, the sizing of the bubble facility, the costs of three – four upgrades, the advocates for the upgrades, the sequencing of the facility improvements, getting the improvements in the capital asset cues, and how to get the facility in line. The discussion ended with the facility to be charged to two different subcommittees for more review and analysis – the Facilities Subcommittee and the Visions Committee for master planning. The full report – “A Program for a Large Air-Support Structure to Serve as Multi-purpose Fieldhouse” was shared with each of the members of the AC.

IV. Athletic Department Update – Robert Goodhue (Interim Athletic Director)

• The Football Schedule was to be announced later today with three games being played at Gillette and three here at McGuirk.
• Swimming – the men’s team won the A10s and the women’s team placed second in the A-10s.
• Women’s Softball is currently 4-5.
• Mens basketball hopes to make a run at the tournament appearance and hopes to gain a bye so it will only have to play 3 games in three days in the A10s.
• Women’s basketball continues to make progress and now has 11 wins compared to only three (3) wins all of last year.
• Men’s hockey continues to struggle but begins its first round play against Notre Dame on Sunday.
• Women’s lacrosse is 4-0 and play next against Boston University.
• Men’s lacrosse continues to struggle to get in their winning ways.
• Baseball hopes to open next week
• Women’s tennis is also doing well.

V. New Business

• No new business was brought before the committee but topics for the upcoming March meeting were requested.
• Announcements of the search process for the Athletic Director and will be an update as a point of discussion at the March meeting of the AC.

Rebecca Spencer moved to close the meeting at 12:56 pm. Ed Ward seconded the motion. The next meeting of the AC will be on Friday, March 27th, 2015.