University of Massachusetts  
Athletic Council Committee Minutes  
September 26, 2014  
Recreation Center Conference Room

Committee Members Present:

T. Anderson, D. Barstow, M. Borkhuis, R. Goodhue, E. Hajjar,  
S. Hazen, S. Kobvson, N. Lacey, E. May, J. McCutcheon,  
G. Richason, JC Schnabl, R. Spencer, E. Ward, R. Warnick,  
Co-Chair N. Lacey, Co-Chair T Schoenadel.

Guests: T. McDonald, R. Newcomb, J. Sarsynski, R. Yarworth
Absent: A. Moore, P. Vittum

I. Call to Order

Co-Chair Schoenadel called the September meeting of the Academic Year to order at 11:31 a.m. and welcomed guest speakers to the meeting. Everyone introduced himself or herself and described their roles on the Council and the University.

II. Approval of the Minutes of April 25, 2014

Co-Chair Schoenadel opened the floor to discussion of the Athletic Council minutes from April 25, 2014. There being none, it was so moved by Nelson Lacey and seconded by Ed Ward to accept the motion. All were in favor of approving the Minutes from the April 25, 2014 meeting.

III. Meet the Coach: Russ Yarworth, Head Coach of Men’s Swimming and Diving and Bob Newcomb, Head Coach of Women’s Swimming

With a revered nod towards George Richason, Coach Yarworth stated that he and George have probably been at the University the longest of anyone in the room. Russ reminisced about being a freshman in 1974 on the Umass Swim Team under Coach Bey Melamed, an Israeli Olympian.

After graduating in 1978, Russ would stay on to excel as the Men’s Head Coach for over 3 decades and has served as only the 3rd Coach in the program’s history. Coach Yarworth provided an enthusiastic overview of his program’s achievements that includes capturing 21 titles including 14 Atlantic 10 Championships and eight consecutive New England Championships from 1987 – 1994. Coach is working with a great group of men with a lot of engineering majors in this year’s men’s Swim Team. Coach discussed his program’s unique training program that includes conditioning on both a physical and mental plane so that student-athletes can develop their talents through team unity and spirit. Coach Russ Yarworth spoke about his team’s commitment to giving back to the community through the Outreach Program of Amherst with events such as “light up the night” and Community dinners for charitable donations. Coach discussed
two great freshmen, a New Zealand recruit who was a 16 yr. old National Champion, and a freshman from Attleboro which is Russ’s hometown – a déjà vu of Russ himself 40 years ago. In recruiting efforts, Russ identifies athletes who are able to become top competitors in A-10 Conference. Russ also mentioned the opportunity now to also attract top scholar athletes with academic merit money that had previously not be available for some of his top recruits and how he has been able to recruit from areas of the country that previously he had not been able to do so based on the success and networking of some of his current student athletes.

Coach Bob Newcomb opened saying “I should have known better than to have had Russ go first.” Coach Newcomb is pleased with the great growth over the last five years in the quality in athletic and academic abilities of his program. The Women’s Swimming team has 26 swimmers and 5 divers on the team. His team had a 3.4 grade point average last year that was the best yet with 2/3 of the team on the Dean’s List. Scholarships have increased and the program will be fully funded by the end of this coming year. Coach Newcomb outlined his top three goals for the coming years:

1. Winning the A-10 Championship in the coming three years.
3. Continued excellence of the Diving Program with 5-6 Divers excelling at Conference Meets.

Bob stated that the Women’s Swim team is a great place to compete with other institutions right now. Coach is currently recruiting in Florida, the Midwest including Kansas and Colorado and as far away as Greece. His recruiting base is widening out to attract better profile student-athletes to the area.

Coaches Yarworth and Newcomb both answered a number of questions covering topics on from specific as Mikala Butler’s injury and her return to diving; the New Zealand freshman’s partial or full scholarship; academic merit awards for out-of-state students; identification of lead donors helping with Phase II of adding an aquatic proponent to the infrastructure of the Recreation Center; the need for more pools on campus and its priority on the new facility list; and lastly Bob’s wooden stuffed goose visiting the Council meeting 10 years prior with Bob Newcomb was one of the first coaches to participate in the first Coaches Segment of the Athletic Council meeting.

IV. Guest Administrator – Todd McDonald, Associate Athletic Director – update on ticket sales for Football

Todd McDonald is excited about the first Homecoming Game at McGuirk Stadium tomorrow after two and a half years of playing at Gillette. Todd updated the Council that all of the marketing efforts in the Eastern and Western part of the state have paid off with football ticket sales improving substantially. Marketing on Public Transit areas in Boston Metro areas included Umass Football ads at Boston T-Stations, buses, and commuter trains continued to bring more awareness to the program. Attendance at the Boston College game was one of the best in the FBS era even though it was over Labor Day weekend and
competing against very warm weather. Other successful marketing strategies involve TV advertising, Cable zones reaching 30,000 subscribers, and direct marketing here in Western Massachusetts. The Western Mass Marketing efforts have included UMass Football is “Back Home” signs everywhere. Area advertising of “UMass is Coming Home” included the Daily Hampshire Gazette, the Greenfield Recorder, Comcast, Charter, Rt 91 Billboards, and Digital Billboards have all helped to increase exposure and interest in the return of the program to McGuirk. Grass Roots advertising of “UMass is Coming Home” can be seen amongst local businesses with wait staff wearing supplied tee-shirts announcing the return at establishments such as Rafters, The Hangar, Chilis, and Applebees. A huge marketing campaign is ramped up across campus with very strong growth in Social Media of FaceBook™, Snapchat™, and Instagram™. University Relations has now hired a social media specialist, Ty Scheiner, and a social media consultant, Kathleen Hessert to assist in a broad cross section of events including UMass Football. Sam Squad has generated $30,000 of donations that has generated 3,000 tickets donated to many youth groups across the state. Tomorrow’s game will be and was sold out!

MinuteFan Way, new activity concept near the stadium, will be tested for the first time where a portion of the road leading to the blocked off to through traffic before game time as a fan friendly and family friendly park filled with fun activities such as for family, fans, students and kids. Todd circulated a traffic flow pattern sheet for the Stadium area with general parking for fans in Lots 22 and 33. Season ticket holders and donors will have parking passes for Lot 11. Dallas Mall will be closed to thru traffic. Vehicles are also able to park around most of the stadium for tailgating four hours before game time. Todd also noted that Isenberg purchased 500 tickets for the Boston College Game and their Dean did the coin toss at that game. While the Colorado game attendance was down, the demand for Homecoming and Band Day is on October 18th at Gillette are expected to be higher and the nationally televised game on November 12th will likely attract a strong crowd as well. Each of the remaining games at McGuirk with is themed with the November 12th game themed as “Hometown Heroes” Day and the November 28th game as “Family Day” with lots of local attractions.

V. Request for Final Reports for Filing Annual Report for AC – Remember to send Digital copy to Co-Chairs and Nomination of Officers

Co-Chair Lacey asked for council members to submit their annual subcommittee reports as soon as possible. The six subcommittee’s assignments should remain the same as last years for continuity unless anyone has other preferences. Nelson will bring the Subcommittee List next meeting. George Richason also reported on behalf of himself and Bob Goodhue- the same slate of officers shall remain in place for this academic year, stating “Keep doing what we’re doing until we get it right!” Nominated for Co-Chairs this year are Nelson Lacey and Tracey Schoenadel and Rod Warnick for Secretary. With the three nominations on the floor, it was so moved by Bob Goodhue and seconded by Ed Ward to accept the motion. All were in favor of approving the nominated slate of officers.
VI. Athletic Department Update by AD John McCutcheon

- Football’s Homecoming is tomorrow, September 27th. Available tickets were only 300 this morning and should be sold out by mid-afternoon.
- Capital Projects now completed are the Football Performance Building and the Stadium Press Box. The Performance Center Dedication Ceremony will be at 4 pm this afternoon, September 26 with ribbon cutting with President Caret, Senator Rosenberg, and the Chancellor. The Performance Center is a great facility and resource for the campus. There remain a few naming opportunities within the Training Area of the Performance Center.
- Future football scheduling has been successful including an Army Series for 2018-2019. Football unlike Basketball is scheduled 2 – 3 years out.
- Conference opportunities remain undecided until we demonstrate competitive play on the field and show that our attendance is growing.
- AD McCutcheon reviewed the Bowl Playoff structure and its distribution and those monies will still remain available for UMass through this season and next as a result of the MAC membership.
- TV Opportunities with ESPN will remain a constant top priority and another source of income potential. Even now with our upgrade we are reaching and increasing our viewership with broadcast on ESPN3 more than ever as measured against the opportunities that would have been available at the FCS level.
- The Champions Center is on schedule for completion next spring. Basketball Coaches are seen bringing recruits to see what’s in store for spring.
- Jaime Seguin has stepped down from her position as Deputy AD, SWA to work at a similar position in the Boston College Business Office. John is in the business office each afternoon covering her business and reporting responsibilities and a national search for a new position for a Business Office Manager will take place. In the interim, Joan Hopkins will serve as the SWA and other staff, such as Jeff Smith will assume more administrative responsibilities.
- Katie Woods, Associate AD for Development is also leaving with a move to Pennsylvania. Rocko DeLuca is looking to replace her with the coming months.
- A question and answer session followed with the following topics: Bubble Practice facility item; John’s meeting with Ted Fey on the air support building or Fieldhouse with an honest look at the projected costs. The costs associated with heat, air conditioning as well as wear and tear on the bubble itself is all factors that need to be calculated in the project’s feasibility study. Getting this before the Campus Planning staff will be a priority to help with the planning and projected need to help a broad cross section of teams needing more quality training and practice space. Teams such as field hockey, soccer, baseball and lacrosse teams have different practice and turf surfaces needs than Football and may not be able to use an air support structure for team practices unless and multi-purpose plan or facility can be developed.
• Head Tennis Coach Judy Dixon has indicated that there may be a need for a tennis facility with the closing of Hampshire College’s tennis courts and this may become a higher priority need in the short term. John is confident that a solution for a tennis facility can be found as was accomplished with the crisis with the Crew Team leading to the beautiful new boat house on Route 9.

VII. **NCAA College Landscape (McCutcheon)**

AD McCutcheon reviewed the effect of Power 5 vote, the O’Bannon case and changes in the NCAA Landscape.

There is still a considerable amount of uncertainty with the Power 5 Conferences and the restructuring and the ability to override votes at the NCAA level. It is clear that the Power 5 will have much more autonomy under the new governance structure. This basically means the Power 5 Conferences will have the autonomy to make their own rules with a vote of the conference membership and may at some point, once these new rules are agreed upon will translate into more benefits for players. These new rules may cover such topics as full cost scholarships, four-year scholarships, full cost of attendance or payments to players, educational trusts and benefits to players and families and likely different rules on how player agents may interact with players. These rule changes will be available to other schools, schools in the non-power conferences, such as the AAC, MAC, A10, Hockey East etc.; but the schools and their respective conferences may or may not elect to adopt the rules. For example, if the Power 5 Conferences elect to pay players for the full cost of attendance, on average $2500 each per player, the added cost for football would be about $250,000 – an estimate that AD McCutcheon felt was viable even within our current structure. However, the voting in of the new rules in the Power 5 will take time and the new rules may not necessary be voted in fast given the proposed new structure and the voting and override voting process. We will likely not see many new changes until at least January 2015 and maybe later. With the football power conferences commanding the need for change, there will still need to be lengthy legal discussions about the implementation and impacts of any new rule changes.

The O’Bannon case has yet to be fully adjudicated and the interpretation of the outcome of the case is not yet clear. A federal judge ruled that the NCAA can't stop players from selling the rights to their names, images and likenesses, striking down NCAA regulations that prohibit players from getting anything other than scholarships and the cost of attendance at schools. What this specifically means will still need to be determine and it appears there may be a cap on the use of images or the use thereof to generate profits for the institutions. Further complicating the issues will be whether Title IX regulations will extend such rights to female players and other players outside of the football and men’s basketball.

VIII. **New Business**

• Ed Ward expressed his concern and great dismay in the continued efforts on the part Max Page as a spokesman for the Ad Hoc Football Committee
releasing incorrect financial numbers than were approved by the Council’s Finance Subcommittee as well as false football information to the Media to the WBZ investigative team regarding the APR rates of the football program. A discussion followed by Ernie May, Ed Ward and other Council members. Ed Ward calls for a formal statement in support of the Athletic Department to be released by the Athletic Council in rebuttal of Page’s inaccuracies. Much of the discussion revolved around the source of funds for the football program and how they are counted and portrayed in the media. Nelson Lacey indicated that will be an AD Hoc Meeting again in the end of November and these issues could be further debated there. This discussion was tabled at this meeting; however, there appear to be a leaning towards a formal statement to be made by the AC regarding the continued level of misinformation being disseminated by various individuals from the campus community.

• A discussion of the September 20th game at Penn State followed with emphasis on the highlights of the Umass Marching Band and its involvement during their game day activities. The next Council Meeting will be held Friday, October 31, 2014 in the Recreation Center Conference Room 117.

Co-Chair Schoenadel called for a motion to close the meeting. George Richason so moved to close the meeting at 1:05 pm. Bob Goodhue seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.