I. Call to Order

Council Secretary Rod Warnick called the March 27, 2015 meeting of the Athletic Council to order at 11:30 a.m. and welcomed guest speaker, Coach Judy Dixon, and John Blihar, Director of the Rec Center.

Approval of the Minutes of February 2015

Secretary Warnick opened the floor to discussion of the Athletic Council minutes from February 2015. There being no corrections or additions, it was so moved by George Richason and seconded by Ed Ward to accept the motion to approve. All were in favor of approving the Minutes from the February 2015 meeting.

II. Meet the Coach: Judy Dixon, Head Coach of Women’s Tennis

Rod Warnick introduced Coach Dixon as the “winningest” coach in her 21 years at UMass Athletics. Coach Judy Dixon is proud her top caliber team as consistently being one of the best teams in the conference. Coach discussed the present facility and dire budget challenges of the Tennis Program. The most urgent need for the Tennis program is new practice facilities. The team currently rents the indoor practice courts located at Bay Road at Hampshire College that may eventually be converted for other uses. The team also rents courts in Sunderland that are expensive and limited in number and are shared with a church group. The Tennis Program needs indoor practice courts and would prefer them to be located here on the UMass campus. Judy also discussed the dismal budget constraints of the Tennis program that prevents them from playing competitive schools due to high travel and hotel costs. Judy also discussed their win/loss stats looking good at first glance. However, she went on to explain the team’s record of 16-4 prove that the team isn’t playing competitive teams. Coach Dixon also reviewed stats for home/away games for other schools: Dartmouth plays 11 home games out of 25; Brown 13/25; Syracuse 10/25; Richmond 12/25; and UMASS 5/25. The tennis program is now at a competitive disadvantage for home games and higher caliber competition.
Coach Dixon discussed the state of Tennis Program is now at an important crossroad in the team’s history and then need for permanent indoor tennis courts or facility and a larger budget will help move the program forward and help the program to continue to be successful. Coach stated that building an indoor tennis facility would be a revenue-producing project for the University. The courts would be in high demand and create a lot of rental income. Coach has been lucky and skilled in recruiting by attracting international and nationally-ranked tennis student-athletes, based on her coaching history, contacts and experience. Council members brainstormed what the next steps would be in helping the tennis program survive financially and discussed steps to building the new indoor courts.

III. Report on Academic Student Services: Joan Hopkins, Associate AD for Academics

Joan praised the Tennis Program’s consistently high GPA. She reviewed the fall 2014 highlights and distributed the Annual Report Summary – highlights below:

Academics

- The cumulative grade point average for all sports teams at UMass for the Fall Semesters was a 3.088, which is the highest Fall Semester cumulative GPA ever recorded for our teams at UMass.
- 3 men’s teams and 10 women’s teams had a semester GPA over a 3.0.
- 351 student-athletes had a grade point average of 3.0 or above and were named to the Maroon Scholars List.
- 167 student-athletes earned Dean’s List recognition, which is a 3.5 grade point average or above.
- 25 student-athletes earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average.
- 58 student-athletes are members of the Commonwealth Honors College.
- 163 student-athletes were named to the Fall A-10 Commissioner’s Honor Roll.
- Academic Award recipients were reviewed which included student-athletes from Football, Men’s Soccer, Women’s Cross Country and Field Hockey.

Joan believes that her staff is on the cutting edge of Academic Counseling. She also reviewed the many challenges facing her staff. The Boyden Academic Facility is not impressive, lacking in confidential areas to conduct private one-on-one meetings and quiet study areas for student-athletes to meet in privacy with their academic tutors.

Joan invited the Council to attend the 2nd Annual Samy’s Awards which will take place on Monday, April 27th at 6 pm for the Red Carpet Event/ appetizers and 7 pm for the Awards Ceremony. The event will be held in the Campus Center Auditorium.
IV. **John Blihar- Campus Recreation Center Director**

John reviewed the status of the Recreation Center Program including all Intramural activities, aquatics programs and group fitness. The Recreation Center is also at a cross roads with major budget constraints with student payroll with the increases in the minimum wage taking effect this next year. He explained that a dedicated student recreation fee over and above the Athletic fee would help ease the burden. He also commented on the fact that all cardio and weight training equipment needs to be replaced for the wear and tear over the last five years. The Rec Center is a major stop on the campus tour to showcase the University and all it has to offer for quality of life for students while on campus.

John discussed the second phase of the Campus Center Rec Center that would include a swimming facility being a top priority. The Boyden Swim facilities are ancient and limited in the amount of time offered to the campus aside from Division I Swimming. UMass and a fully completed Recreation Center with a swimming facility could make the campus a destination of choice and make its swim community happy and bring financial gains to the campus with national and regional swim meets and competition including rental opportunities for local and regional swim programs.

V. **Athletic Department Update – Robert Goodhue (Interim Athletic Director)**

Bob opened with stating that challenges can be transformed into opportunities. Bob said that the new AD Ryan Bamford will bring great positive energy to the program. Ryan, as a young 36-year old, is a most impressive choice having spent the last few years as Senior Associate AD at Georgia Tech after spending nearly a decade at Yale University. Yale University’s AD showed his admiration and respect for Ryan by attending Ryan’s Press Conference with several of the Yale Athletic Administrators and the head of the ECAC. Ryan has already been working on several football contracts and has secured some 2016 contests through his strong networking contacts.

Bob will be staying on through May 2015 after Ryan’s appointment to offer guidance and support throughout the department.

Other Athletic Department highlights from the Spring and Winter seasons mentioned:

- Men’s Basketball struggled at the end of their season – were 16-9 when Bob arrived as Interim and finished their season at 17-15.
- Women’s Basketball’s performance has greatly improved – Bob will be meeting a great recruit from Florida today.
- Hockey had an incredible Hockey East Tournament victory against Notre Dame 4-3 with 5 overtimes- longest overtimes in NCAA Hockey history. They ran out of steam with the last two games vs. Notre Dame.
- The Softball pitching staff needs to turn it around at St. Joseph’s – playing three games in Philadelphia over the next two days.
• Women’s Lacrosse is 7-1 doing great – play today at McGuirk Stadium against Duquesne and should make another strong run in A10 and post season play
• Crew will be rowing at URI with salt water events tomorrow and in Boston next weekend rowing against Boston College, MIT and Dartmouth.
• Men’s Lacrosse turned it around with three big consecutive wins including victories over Penn State and Hofstra. They play Towson tomorrow in MD and back at McGuirk next weekend vs. Fairfield.
• Tennis is 8-4 and doing very well.
• Garber Field has been wounded – ripped by snow plows – hopefully it will repair Monday and some competitive events including lacrosse will be back on the field soon.
• Football spring practice started March 6th.
• April 17th will be the Spring Football Game and pre-game reception at the Football Performance Center. Ryan Bamford will be back and attending the event. Ryan expects to start either in late April or early May.
• Track & Field starts next week.
• Bob toured the Champions Center last week – spectacular building which will be a great recruiting asset. The official opening will be next fall.

VI. New Business

• Rod Warnick called for Subcommittee reports to be submitted before the last meeting on April 24th.

George Richason moved to close the meeting at 12:58 pm. Ed Ward seconded the motion.