I. Call to Order

Council Co-Chair Nelson called the April 29, 2015 meeting of the Athletic Council to order at 2:01PM and the members introduce themselves to the newly hired Athletic Director, Ryan Bamford.

Approval of the Minutes of February 2015

Chair Nelson Lacey opened the floor to discussion of the Athletic Council minutes from March 2015. There being no corrections or additions, it was so moved by Ed Ward and seconded by Rod Warnick to accept the minutes as presented. All were in favor of approving the minutes from the March 2015 meeting.

A “Moment of Silence” was observed in honor of long-time Athletic Council Member George Richason, who passed away at the age of 99 on April 14, 2015. Professor Richason was emeritus professor of chemistry and an alumnus whose nearly 70-year career was intricately intertwined with the university in a variety of aspects, including being honored in the UMass Athletic Hall of Fame and serving on the Athletic Council for most of his professional life as key member and historian of the Athletic Council’s role in college athletics.

Nelson Lacey indicated that after carefully consultation with Ryan and his staff that the NCAA Audit report and review of the Academic Support Services (item #4 on the agenda) of the Athletic Department was being tabled until the fall semester pending more time for review and more clarification of the audit and review reporting process as required by the NCAA.
II. Kim Callicoatte, Associate Director of the Compliance.

Kim Callicoatte presented the equity report that was filed this past year covering the period of 2013-2014. (Note – the 2014-2015 report is not yet available). The reporting period typically ends in the summer of the current year so the data are not yet readily available for this year. However, the 2014-2015 data are nearly ready to review and submit. Reviewed in this report was enrollment numbers, including roster numbers, students with full and partial academic and scholarship aid and the distribution of male and female athletes as to be reported in the gender equity plan. The challenge for Athletics has been to increase the football scholarships from the FCS mandates 63 to the FBS level of 85 while still protecting the Olympic sports and the number of female scholarships being offered are moving forward in line with the plan for gender equity. Also reviewed along with gender equity was the cost of attendance and how it will affect both the major sports and Olympic sports. The distribution of coaches and staff was also reviewed by both gender and diversity. A discussion of the cost of attendance was reviewed and the estimate to cover cost of attendance was approximately $1600 per student athlete.

AD Ryan Bamford indicated that when we reconvene in September that the Athletic Department would have a plan and the Chancellor was supporting a plan that was equitable and covered as many student athletes as possible. The A10 Conference has committed to the COA for both men’s and women’s basketball. AD Bamford indicated that the Power 5 conferences committed to the COA proposal and would figure out how to cover the cost within their respective budgets. Various colleges were discussed with Auburn paying and $5200, Georgia Tech $2400 and other varying across the board. So, the COA seems to vary across the schools. Also discussed were the unintended consequences of paying athletes and how it creates unwanted consequences. Nevertheless, the range seems to be in the area of $1,200 to $5,500 with Auburn and Tennessee at the top of the range. Ryan Bamford indicated that the goal is to fund as many student athletes as possible for the full cost of attendance. Some discussion also revolved around the fact that we were going independent in football in 2016 and whether our match ups would be fair based on cost of attendance.

Kim Callicoatte next presented the APR Progress Report. This is a six year moving average of graduation rates, eligibility and general academic progress of the student athletes by team. Several of the sports held perfect scores with men’s basketball improving substantially, and some sports receiving perfect scores. Two sports, men’s and women’s soccer experienced some low APR rates due to international eligibility and coaching changes.

III. Proposal for New Sub-Committee on Student Athlete Welfare – Rebecca Spencer

Rebecca Spencer, FAR, brought forward a proposal to form a new sub-committee on student athlete welfare. There were presented two options – 1) OPTION 1 -- simply form a new sub-committee and 2) OPTION 2 – simply form a new sub-committee that would gather and work with the disperse parts of monitoring student athlete welfare with specific attention in monitoring student
athlete mental health and concussions through three existing committees that the Athletic Department has created to help on these matters – a) Student Athlete Welfare Committee, b) Athlete Care Committee and c) Diversity Committee. It was noted that whether we opt for option 1 or 2, a new charge regarding the responsibility for monitoring student health and its related issues would need to be written. Ernie May indicated there were no specific guidelines from the Faculty Senate on how we as an AC could or should organize around this proposal. Jeff Smith indicated that 1) Student Welfare Committee would be able to provide training and seminars for our student athletes in order to be more proactive in monitoring both mental health and concussions and concussion-like symptoms; 2) the Athlete Care Committees – would be in a position to monitor high risk student athletes and put into place a system for monitoring conduct, behavior, nutrition, cognitive disorders, and also involved the services of the professional medical team of doctors and physicians working with the teams.; and 3) Diversity Committee could monitor and assess the culture and climate through the Diversity Climate Survey.

A notion was put forward by Nelson Lacey to adopt Option 2 and seconded by Pat Vittum. The floor was opened for further discussion and there was none. The council voted and approved this option at 2.44PM with a unanimous vote. Rebecca Spencer, FAR was charged with activating the charge over the summer.

IV. Athletic Department Update – Ryan Bamford (Athletic Director)

Ryan indicated that he was now on the job for three days and had not yet gotten us into a conference but is working on it and if we do our work we should have a chance at landing in an important FBS Conference and have our choices of conferences, but the first job is to get our priorities in order and to develop and plan. This includes getting the program ready and up to speed in across the board in all areas and it is not enough to just say we are doing this for the desire to increase our revenue stream. We must also work in all areas to provide special athletic experiences for the student athletes but also to engage and rally the campus support to move up in the conference affiliation and discussions. Ryan Bamford also addressed the health and welfare of the student athlete, the branding of the program and UMass and the academic success of our athletes in the process. He also addressed the issues of coming up to speed about the current condition of the program and examining as many details as possible.

Other Athletic Department highlights from the end of the Spring Season mentioned included:

- The status of the Men’s and Women’s lacrosse teams, including that the Men’s Lacrosse team has a big game against Delaware on Comcast Sports.
- The status of women’s softball and if they will make the A10 tournament.
- Women’s Tennis has finished up the season and will be in the A10 finals.
- Baseball has some big series coming up and still in the running for the playoffs with 3 more series to play and over 9 games to play.
- Women’s Rowing is in the A10 Championship run and should advance further into the NCAAs.
- Goal is to have as many teams as possible playing in their respective tournaments in May and in the A10 or conference playoffs.
- Ryan will continue to evaluate the Senior Leadership Team and hopes to add 2-3 or probably more positions and support staff but hopes by fall to have the staff and the key positions filled. He feels we need to be patient as he and the staff build a plan and begin the steps to execute a plan to move the program forward.
- Top priorities in the coming months in a chronological sense would be: #1) to get the personnel plan in place and #2) to begin the long-term process to find a home for the football – a conference that will for all of the sports, but to do this, he stressed that many items of the program have to be of value and there needs to be a number of attraction points to get to that next step and a considerable amount of the attention needs to be focused on “raising the profile.” This type of the plan will bring the attention to help us with the next conference affiliation. This will take time, great PR and involvement from the student athletes and the support and engagement of the University.

The SAAC (Student Athlete Advisory Committee) will also play important role in this process where the opportunity will be to: 1) engaged the student body in Athletics and 2) to bring us new ideas and big ideas to bring attention to the program. Important is this process is to bring more visibility to the program and while critical to Ryan and his staff, it is a job that cannot be done by one person, it will take the efforts of many to build the relationship to bring the program to a higher level.

- Nelson Lacey thanked Ryan Bamford for his overview his plans for the Athletic Department over the coming months.

V. New Business

INDOOR PRACTICE FACILITY. Ed Ward brought to the floor a need to make a statement regarding a practice facility. Ed had indicated that has been discussed with the Chancellor and now the Athletic Council needed to make a statement about our position regarding this facility as we have seen a presentation by Ted Fay on what the various options for a practice facility might be. An extended discussion followed regarding which facility would be the next priority – should it be the practice facility, a new swimming pool or addition to the Campus Recreation Center or a bubble to replace the use of the Hampshire College facility for Women’s Tennis. The extended discussion ended with a motion put forward that stated…."The Athletic Council gives their full support to explore moving forward in the steps to explore the feasibility and promotion of the creation of an Indoor Practice Facility.” The statement was worded and adjusted by Rod Warnick and members of the council. Ed Ward moved the motion to a vote, Pat Vittum seconded and the motion passed.
**OTHER NEW BUSINESS.** Other new business included that the Compliance Subcommittee had completed their review and will file their report in the fall.

Campus Recreation has also updated their usage statistics and has been forwarded to Nelson and Rebecca.

Faculty, alumni and staff were encouraged to purchase season tickets for the upcoming season. Game themes have been developed for the games at McGuirk and Gillette. The UMass Alumni Association is offering a program for those interested in the Notre Dame game that includes a pep rally in Chicago, a train ride from Chicago to South Bend and game tickets.

Two student members who were graduating were also recognized for participating on the council including Diego Fellows and Emily Hajjar.

Bob Goodhue was also recognized for filling in as Interim Athletic Director during the search process and keeping the department focused through the Spring Semester.

In conclusion, the Nominating Committee of Bob Goodhue and JC Schnabl were tasked with bring forward a recommendation for officers for the AC in the Fall Semester.

Dates for the Athletic Council meetings will be announced soon but a new start time has already been decided. Meetings will commence at 10AM on Fridays next semester.

Ed Ward made the motion to adjourn and seconded by Bob Goodhue. The meeting concluded at 3:44PM.