Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2019 - Page 1 of 7

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MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON INTERCOLLEGiate ATHLETICS MEETING

JUNE 6, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Jeffrey Portnoy called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 6, 2019, at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Information Technology Building, 1st Floor Conference Room 105A/B, 2520 Correa Road, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96822.

Committee members in attendance: Committee Chair Jeffrey Portnoy; Committee Vice Chair Stanford Yuen; Regent Kelli Acopan; Board Vice Chair Wayne Higaki.

Committee members excused: Regent Robert Westerman.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Lee Putnam; Regent Simeon Acoba; Regent Ben Kudo; Regent Alapaki Nahale-a; Regent Michelle Tagorda; Regent Ernest Wilson Jr. (ex officio committee members); President David Lassner; Vice President for Legal Affairs/University General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy Donald Straney; Interim UH-Hilo (UHH) Chancellor Marcia Sakai; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Kendra Oishi; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 19, 2019, AND MARCH 20, 2019 MEETINGS

Committee Vice Chair Yuen moved to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2019 and March 20, 2019, meetings, seconded by Board Vice Chair Higaki, and the motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Oishi announced that the Board Office received late written testimony from Bonnyjean Manini and Landon Li, President of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i (ASUH), offering comments relating to the student athletic fee survey results and status report.

Daniel Flores, President of the UHM Graduate Student Organization (GSO), provided oral testimony in opposition to an athletics fee increase and expressed concerns over the wording of questions and graphics in the survey. He noted that GSO
was unable to offer a formal resolution in opposition because it is in between general assemblies.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Coaches Corner: Jeff Hall, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Women’s Beach Volleyball Head Coach

A talk story session was held with UH-Mānoa’s (UHM) Women’s Beach Volleyball Coach Jeff Hall, former associate coach of both the UHM’s women’s indoor volleyball and men’s volleyball teams. Coach Hall recognized the Nagatani Academic Center for the services they provide student-athletes. Coach Hall highlighted the team’s athletic and academic achievements, including a 3.14 team grade point average, graduating 18 players with undergraduate degrees and 6 players with graduate degrees in five years, having 19 Academic All-Big West players, and 1 Big West Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

Committee Chair Portnoy asked how many schools play beach volleyball. Coach Hall responded that he believes there are approximately 70 beach volleyball teams. He added that the sport started 8 years ago and this is the fourth year of National Collegiate Athletic Association competition.

Committee Chair Portnoy asked how an athlete decides between indoor and beach volleyball. Coach Hall responded that some athletes play both at a young age and realize later that beach volleyball is a different element because players have to coach themselves sometimes, players get to choose their teammates, and the beach lifestyle. Players are gravitating toward beach volleyball, but there are not enough scholarship opportunities.

Regent Nahale-a asked how the coaches determine whether a student-athlete is a good kid. Coach Hall explained the importance of networking and asking friends and fellow coaches about a player’s character. The department focuses on “recruiting smart” and doing the necessary homework on players and asking tough questions. Hawai‘i is a destination and the team is successful, so players want to come to UHM.

Committee Vice Chair Yuen asked if a player uses up their eligibility for volleyball could they still play beach volleyball. Coach Hall explained there is a 5-year limit on NCAA sports, so it is possible that a student could play 4 years of indoor volleyball and have 1 year of eligibility left to play beach volleyball.

Committee Vice Chair Yuen asked how many local players were on the team. Coach Hall responded that the number of local players varies between 5 and 6 players, although this year there are 3 and next year that number will be 4 or 5. He noted that some mainland players have families here and want to come back, but the coaches strive to recruit local players first.

Committee Chair Portnoy asked Coach Hall for his opinion on the value of non-revenue sports. Coach Hall responded that the student-athlete experience for players is the main value. Student-athletes are driven academically and athletically, and sports
programs are an avenue for them. He added that no university has an all revenue-generating sports model.

Regent Acoba asked if there was remuneration for making it to the championships and Coach Hall explained that at this point there was nothing for beach volleyball.

Committee Chair Portnoy thanked the athletic directors and coaches for UHM and UHH for participating in committee meetings, which he found very educational. He hoped the next committee chair would continue to engage with the athletics department in the future.

D. Student Athletic Fee Survey Results and Status Update

Committee Chair Portnoy took this agenda item out of order. There was no objection by the other committee members.

UHM Athletic Director (AD) David Matlin explained that the athletics department has done their best to collaborate with various stakeholders such as the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i (ASUH), GSO, and the Mānoa Institutional Research Office (MIRO) who consulted with the athletics department and administered the survey. The process involved analyzing of peers, meeting with student government organizations, and conducting a survey. Feedback from testimony today will be utilized to formulate a formal recommendation to the Campus Fee Advisory Committee (CFAC) in fall 2019.

Dr. Yang Zhang, Director of the Mānoa Institutional Research Office, provided background on types of surveys and survey design, and reviewed survey results. She noted that some of the survey questions came from a previous survey administered by ASUH, with the current survey being designed to have more open-ended questions. The survey also included a link to background information regarding the survey. She explained the survey response time was extended at the request of ASUH, which resulted in a fairly good response rate of 13%.

Committee Chair Portnoy commented that UHM has the lowest student fees in the Big West and Mountain West Conferences, and revenues are dramatically lower than the majority of UHM’s competition, which raises the question of the importance of athletics. According to the survey, the majority of students say athletics is important but they do not want to pay for it. He hoped that the student fee issue would be resolved in the first quarter of the next academic year, even if the recommendation is that there should be no increase.

Regent Acopan expressed appreciation for the work that went into the survey and the outreach. She felt the survey questions could be more straightforward because many students do not understand what the fees are used for, which might lead to a more qualitative answer on whether students support a fee increase. AD Matlin responded that the survey results highlighted the confusion among students regarding the athletic fee, because some students thought the fee went to the Warrior Recreation Center.
Committee Chair Portnoy felt the survey was helpful in pointing out concerns students had with the benefits students receive for the fee. He noted that UH runs a $3 to $4 million annual deficit, and board policy requires the program break even in some way, so there needs to be a determination whether an increase in the student fee is needed to support an athletics program.

Regent Nahale-a agreed that the issue is about the value of the athletics program to student-athletes, the university, and the state, and whether it is worth it to increase the fee. He noted that the athletics program is doing well in terms of the character of student-athletes that are graduating. He felt that the university should invest in excellence and believes it is tied to a strong athletics program.

AD Matlin reiterated that the athletics department will work on a recommendation regarding the athletic fee to be brought to the CFAC in fall 2019.

A question was raised about the CFAC and President Lassner explained that the CFAC is comprised of students, faculty, and administrators, who review all fee proposals and provide recommendations. The CFAC recommendation is not binding, and administration and the athletics department would need to consider any recommendation before bringing it to the board for approval.

**E. Proposed Revisions to Regents Policy 7.208, Intercollegiate Athletics**

AD Matlin explained that the proposed policy revisions are intended to provide a clearer framework for guiding principles, oversight responsibilities of the board, and responsibilities the board has delegated to the campus chief executive officer. Emphasis was placed on a clear articulation of the guiding principles underlying the athletic program in the areas of health and safety, commitment to academics, equal opportunity, broad and enthusiastic campus and community support, and compliance with NCAA and conference requirements.

Committee Vice Chair Yuen moved to approve the proposed revisions to RP 7.208, seconded by Board Vice Chair Higaki.

Regent Acoba commented that under the policy it appears the board only has authorization to establish or abolish an entire intercollegiate athletics program; but does not explicitly state what the board’s obligations are or who is responsible for notifying the board regarding the state of the athletics program or events that would draw unusual public attention or negatively impact financial performance. He indicated that this seems contrary to the general guidelines for governing boards. He noted that the role of the athletics director versus the faculty athletics representative is unclear and questioned the delegation of authority and it impact on the role of the board.

President Lassner explained that the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) is a position identified by the NCAA that helps ensure the academic integrity of the athletic programs, and suggested the title be capitalized in the policy. He noted that the FAR does not replace any of the administrative responsibilities of an athletic director, and reports directly to the campus CEO and not the athletic director, which helps prevent the types of academic fraud that has occurred at other institutions. Regent Acoba
suggested that policy language should clarify that the FAR is responsible for ensuring academic integrity. President Lassner explained that the proposed delegation of authority language is standard in most institution’s board policies and does not mean that authorities the policy assigns to the board are delegated. He shared his philosophy that the board should tell administration what to do and ensure administration is doing its job, but the board should not actively manage intercollegiate athletics.

A suggestion was made to identify the campus CEO for UHM and UHH in the policy.

VP Okinaga explained that the board’s exercise of its responsibilities for management and oversight of intercollegiate athletics is through the passage of this policy, and the priorities and principles elucidated define how administration should manage the athletics department. The board retains the ability to delegate whatever it chooses in this policy. She noted that the wording about notifying the board of events or situations is not prescriptive to allow the board flexibility in responding to individual situations.

Board Chair Putnam agreed with Regent Acoba that delegation of authority may be too broadly worded. She noted that financial management has been an area of great concern and commented that the board might want to consider having further involvement in the extent of efficiencies and remedies that the campus CEO propose rather than being silent and letting it all be handled at the campus level.

Committee Chair Portnoy reminded members that the board passed priorities in October 2018, one of which stated the “board is ultimately responsible for athletics policy and oversight,” and suggested that be included in the policy. He noted that historically there have been some tensions between the regents and administration regarding athletics, and work has been done in the past few years on changing that dynamic and better understanding the respective roles.

Regent Acoba commented that AD Matlin has done an excellent job, but the policy needs to be applicable in the future and not depend on any one person.

AD Matlin indicated that administration could work on updating the policy and send a draft to committee members for review prior to bringing forward the policy as an action item for approval at a future board meeting.

Suggestions were made that guiding principles be reordered to put broad and enthusiastic campus and community support last, and that mission statements require board approval.

B. Academics Progress Report

Dr. David Ericson, UHM FAR, provided an overview of the academic performance rate (APR) by sport, graduate success rate (GSR) by sport and overall, student-athlete origin, academic progress chart, and missed class days. He noted that the men’s basketball team has overcome the APR issues that resulted in NCAA penalties a few years ago, and currently has a perfect APR of 1,000. UH
aspires in the future to score high enough to be eligible for the financial awards for APR performance that were recently instituted by the NCAA.

Board Vice Chair Higaki left at 1:54 p.m., quorum was maintained.

Dr. Ericson indicated the GSR rate has consistently exceeded 80%, which is significantly higher than the general student body. He noted that women’s cross-country, soccer, and tennis teams average over a cumulative 3.5 GPA.

Dr. Ericson explained that missing over 20 days of class is a concern, and men’s/women’s golf and women’s tennis all exceeded that threshold. He noted that the lack of a nearby golf course for practice was a contributing factor as it takes time to travel to west O’ahu. AD Matlin indicated availability and the ability to get good rates at courses in town has been challenging.

Concern was expressed over the women’s tennis team missing class for 1/3 of the semester. AD Matlin explained that the Big West Conference recently adopted legislation that will provide for fewer missed class days and a more competitive schedule, which should help correct the situation. He noted that sports like tennis and golf tend to have more missed class days due to the nature of the sport, which they do their best to mitigate and minimize. He indicated that a golf simulator is part of facility improvements, which will allow players to practice on campus. Dr. Ericson added that the women’s golf team has the highest GPA despite the missed class days.

Courtney Tsumoto, Department Chair, Student-Athlete Academic Services, presented an overview of the Nagatani Academic Center, staff members and resources’ holistic advising model existing and planned student-athlete academic support (SAAS) programs; an update on GradesFirst, a web-based early-alert student management system, and STAR Student Balance, an advising, scheduling, and communication tool. Ms. Tsumoto also shared student-athlete academic outcomes, and reviewed status of past, current, and future goals.

AD Guillen provided an update on the academic performance of UHH student-athletes since fall 2013, including the overall GPA measured by semester and cumulative, sport-by-sport GPA comparison, retention of student-athletes, and graduation rates. He noted that this is the first year that the overall GPA for student-athletes is expected to average over a 3.0, and student-athlete retention is higher than the general student population. He added that UHH’s academic success rate is 68%, which is slightly above the NCAA Division II average.

C. Facility Update

UHH Athletics Director Patrick Guillen provided a facility update on completed, ongoing and future priority projects for UHH. He highlighted the Student-Athlete Success Lab and noted that student-athletes previously studied in the library or other areas. He also highlighted the new soccer field project and tennis court improvements.

AD Matlin provided an overview of completed, current, and in design UHM facilities projects.
F. Committee Annual Review

Committee Chair Portnoy noted that the committee annual review was self-explanatory and that the committee did a great job this year. He expressed thanks to Committee Vice Chair Yuen and Board Chair Putnam for their service to the committee and the board over the past years. President Lassner and AD Matlin were also thanked for their efforts toward making great strides in athletics.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Committee Vice Chair Yuen moved to adjourn and Board Vice Chair Higaki seconded, and with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kendra Oishi
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents