

MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS MEETING

MAY 4, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair William Haning called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa, Information Technology Building, 1st Floor Conference Room 105A/B, 2520 Correa Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822, with regents participating from various locations.

Committee members in attendance: Chair William Haning; Vice-Chair Laurie Tochiki; Regent Eugene Bal; and Regent Ernest Wilson.

Committee members excused: Regent Abigail Mawae

Others in attendance: Board Chair Randy Moore; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Alapaki Nahale-a; Regent Laurel Loo (ex officio committee members); President David Lassner; Vice President (VP) for Administration for Academic Strategy Debora Halbert; VP for Legal Affairs/University General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; VP for Research and Innovation Vassilis Syrmos; UH Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; UH Hilo (UHH) Chancellor Bonnie Irwin; UH West O'ahu Chancellor Maenette Benham; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Haning inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the April 6, 2023, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Lau announced that the Board Office received late written testimony from UHM Wahine Basketball Head Coach Laura Beeman in support of the UHM Athletics Department (UHM Athletics) as well as the services it provides to student-athletes and that no individuals signed up to provide oral testimony.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Presentation and Update on Mental Health and Wellness of Student Athletes

UHM Athletic Director (AD) David Matlin stated that student-athlete well-being is of the utmost concern to UHM Athletics and that the department strives to improve upon its work in this area each and every day. He went over numerous academic and financial initiatives aimed at supporting student-athletes during their time at UHM and beyond; highlighted several academic and athletic achievements of UHM student-athletes; discussed initiatives implemented to improve the health and wellness of

student-athletes which in turn leads to a better overall student-athlete experience; and spoke in detail about proactive, reactive, and preventative measures being taken to ensure that the mental health needs of student-athletes are met, including the hiring of mental health specialists dedicated to the mental healthcare of all student-athletes.

Vice-Chair Tochiki asked about the kind of information that has been ascertained from the annual mental health screening initiative that was embarked upon in Fall 2022, and whether this data has helped UHM Athletics in formulating an appropriate response to concerns, if any, that were discovered thus far. AD Matlin replied that one of the major stressors being faced by student-athletes involves time management and their need to juggle multiple academic, athletic, and personal responsibilities. However, he noted that Jonathan Sladky, M.D., UHM's team physician, who unfortunately was unavailable for this meeting, would be more qualified to answer this question. He also suggested the possibility of having Dr. Sladky and the UHM Athletics's mental health team present on this topic at a future committee meeting.

Regent Nahale-a stated that UHM Athletics's concern for the health and well-being of student-athletes was apparent given the numerous actions that have already been, or are in the process of being, taken to address this matter. However, he opined that there needs to be improvements to the way these efforts are being communicated both to student-athletes and the public to alleviate the perception that UHM Athletics has a laissez-faire attitude toward a student-athlete's well-being. He also inquired as to whether the system to address student-athlete health and wellness at UHM is able to differentiate between the various needs of each student-athlete. AD Matlin concurred with Regent Nahale-a's observations that UHM Athletics needs to communicate its actions better and that each student-athlete has unique needs. He noted that this is a complex issue and that UHM Athletics is constantly working to improve the manner in which it obtains information on the needs of student-athletes so that effective programs can be implemented to address these necessities. Regent Nahale-a mentioned the survey of student-athletes that was proposed during the April 20, 2023, board meeting expressing his belief that this could be used by UHM Athletics as a tool to help determine the needs of student-athletes, whether they are being appropriately responded to by UHM Athletics, and whether additional improvements are needed.

Board Chair Moore voiced his appreciation for UHM Athletics providing context to its actions regarding student-athlete health and wellness by offering comparisons to what is occurring at peer institutions. He also suggested that regular surveys of student-athletes be conducted so that a comparative analysis between information obtained in the initial baseline survey and subsequent surveys can be made. Doing so will provide UHM Athletics with quantifiable data that will allow for more precise determinations to be made as to whether the actions being taken to address the concerns of student-athletes have been effective or needs to be fine-tuned.

UHH AD Patrick Guillen remarked that, like UHM Athletics, ensuring the mental well-being of student-athletes is a high priority for the UHH Athletics Department (UHH Athletics). He reviewed some of the mental health services that were available at UHH; talked about several proactive and preventative actions being taken to address mental health issues among student-athletes, such as concurrently conducting mental health

screening with pre-participation physicals; noted mental health treatment resources available to student-athletes including counseling; and emphasized efforts being undertaken to cultivate a culture among student-athletes, coaches, and staff that promotes mental health care awareness and reduces the stigma associated with obtaining mental health assistance.

Regent Nahale-a asked about the impacts of community support on the well-being of student-athletes at UHH. AD Guillen replied that community support, particularly from the Vulcan Booster Club, plays an integral role in the well-being of student-athletes at UHH. In addition to providing essentials such as meals to UHH student-athletes, the community affords student-athletes with opportunities to develop interpersonal, social, and professional skills via internships and other community engagement activities that will serve them well in their future beyond athletics. Regent Nahale-a praised UHH Athletics for its community outreach efforts stating that these actions have built a sense of pride and belonging across Hawai'i Island.

Vice-Chair Tochiki inquired about efforts by UHH Athletics to promote an athletic culture in which student-athletes feel comfortable seeking assistance for issues they may be facing and expressing concerns about any issues within the department. AD Guillen replied that UHH Athletics continuously tries to foster a sense of 'ohana not only among student-athletes but throughout the athletic department so that individuals can bring forth any concerns without fear of judgment. He also reiterated that UHH Athletics is taking actions to reduce the stigma associated with obtaining mental health assistance that is prevalent throughout intercollegiate athletics.

B. Discussion on University's Response on the Recommendations of the CSS Report

AD Matlin provided information on the progress being made by UHM Athletics in implementing the recommendations contained in the CSS Report. He briefly reviewed each recommendation, along with UHM Athletics's response to and proposed actions for addressing each recommendation, and went over the steps that are currently being taken to initiate the proposed actions. He also noted that each recommendation has been assigned to a senior UHM Athletics leader for oversight purposes as well as to ensure the completion of actions related to their assigned recommendation.

Regent Higaki voiced his concerns with the absence of Regent Mawae who is a former student-athlete and serves as the student regent at these proceedings and suggested possibly deferring discussions on this matter until such time that she could be present at a committee meeting. Chair Haning stated that numerous attempts were made to accommodate Regent Mawae's schedule so as to allow for her participation in this meeting. However, doing so while allowing as many regents as possible to take part in these discussions without considerably delaying the proceedings proved to be logistically impossible. He also remarked that the intent of these discussions was more to consider whether the response of UHM Athletics to the CSS recommendations was adequate and appropriate. It was his belief that the larger issue of addressing student mental health and well-being was an ongoing matter with more substantive conversations to follow at future meetings.

Noting the availability of health care and mental health resources within the university such as at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Regent Wilson advocated for the use of these resources by UHM Athletics to supplement their proposed actions for addressing the recommendations within the CSS Report.

Vice-Chair Tochiki remarked that, while she has been critical of the CSS Report and has expressed concerns regarding its fairness and accuracy, this should in no way be seen as disparaging to the hard work of AD Matlin and the UHM Athletics staff on this matter. However, because of lingering questions about the CSS Report, she is having difficulty in determining whether UHM Athletics's response and proposed actions are adequate. She reviewed some questions that she believes remain unanswered including whether student-athletes are made aware of their rights regarding issues such as discrimination and harassment, whether student-athletes are cognizant of their options to address these issues, whether student-athletes are aware of the contents of the student-athlete handbook, and whether the administration has amended the manner in which complaints are handled to avoid the stonewalling that appeared to occur in the past from certain representatives within UHM Athletics. Vice-Chair Tochiki also echoed the concerns of Regent Higaki with respect to the absence of Regent Mawae, who brings a different perspective to these discussions; spoke about the significance of acknowledging and addressing the concerns raised by UHM student-athletes in an open and forthright manner; and noted the importance of obtaining input and feedback from student-athletes in determining whether the actions of UHM Athletics are sufficient, although a survey may not be the best option for obtaining that input at present. AD Matlin replied that, with respect to the student-athlete handbook, meetings do occur with student-athletes to go over the handbook but that UHM Athletics will focus more on discussing the main points of the handbook in the future rather than simply providing a general overview. He also noted that UHM Athletics is working to improve communications with student-athletes about general policies and procedures, as well as those specifically mentioned within the student-athlete handbook; that UHM student-athletes receive training on a number of Title IX issues including discrimination and harassment; that UHM Athletics responds to issues as quickly as possible after they are brought forth but that this information cannot always be publicized due to privacy concerns; and that UHM Athletics is trying to address this complex issue in a way that does not increase the burdens placed on student-athletes thereby adding to their mental health stressors.

Discussions ensued on the role of regents in this matter; the UHM Athletics' response to the recommendations thus far; the acceptance of accountability on the part of UHM Athletics; the next steps that should be taken including the receipt of quarterly updates on the progress and efficacy of the implementation of the actions proposed by UHM Athletics; the ability for regents to follow-up and provide feedback on the implementation of these actions; and the necessity of allowing time for information to be gathered in order to determine whether the UHM Athletics' response is working or needs to be adjusted.

C. Athletics Budget and Financial Update

AD Matlin gave an update on revenue and expenditure projections noting that, due in large part to work undertaken by the administration and UHM Athletics to fix structural deficit issues, UHM Athletics is projecting a balanced budget for fiscal year 2023. He also discussed several revenue generating initiatives that have been embarked upon, including apparel partnerships and multi-million dollar television broadcast rights, and noted the Hawai'i State Legislature's provision of operational funds for UHM Athletics.

AD Guilen provided a snapshot of revenue and expenditure projections for UHH Athletics stating that an anticipated surplus of almost \$9,000 is expected for fiscal year 2023.

D. Committee Annual Review

Chair Haning referenced the committee annual review matrix provided in the materials packet stating that it sets forth the actions carried out by the committee throughout the year.

Board Chair Moore noted that this would be AD Matlin's last committee meeting, congratulated him on a job well done over the last eight years, and wished him well as he embarks on a new journey.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Haning adjourned the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/S/

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents