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MINUTES

BOARD OF REGENTS COMMITTEE ON STUDENT SUCCESS MEETING

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

A video recording of this meeting may be viewed at the Board of Regents website as follows:

[Meeting Video](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laurie Tochiki called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2024, at Leeward Community College, Education Building, ED-201, 96-045 Ala 'Ike, Pearl City, Hawai'i 96782, with regents participating from various locations.

Committee members in attendance: Chair Laurie Tochiki; Vice-Chair William Haning; Regent Joshua Faumuina; Regent Laurel Loo; and Regent Ernest Wilson.

Others in attendance: Board Chair Gabriel Lee; Regent Neil Abercrombie; Regent Lauren Akitake; Regent Wayne Higaki; Regent Diane Paloma; Regent Mike Miyahira (ex officio committee members); President David Lassner; VP for Legal Affairs/University General Counsel Carrie Okinaga; UH-Mānoa (UHM) Provost Michael Bruno; Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents (Board Secretary) Yvonne Lau; and others as noted.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Tochiki inquired if there were any corrections to the minutes of the June 6, 2024, committee meeting which had been distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Board Secretary Lau announced that the Board Office did not receive any written testimony and no one signed up to provide oral testimony.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

A. College Sports Solutions (CSS) Recommendations Update

Chair Tochiki briefly spoke about the basis for the Committee's decision to delay discussions on the status of recommendations contained within a report, which was generated by CSS, on the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Athletic Department's (UHM Athletics) operations as they pertain to student-athlete welfare and communications.

She also acknowledged the presence of a few student-athletes who would be invited to share their insights on their experiences with UHM Athletics.

Craig Angelos, UHM Athletic Director (AD), provided historical context to, as well as some of the rationale for, the commissioning of an independent assessment of UHM's intercollegiate athletics program; went over a timeline for the work conducted on this matter from the board's approval of terms for the assessment in March 2022 to the CSS's submission of its final report in February 2023; emphasized the report's findings indicated the university and UHM Athletics were compliant with existing policies and procedures and handled matters appropriately; reviewed and discussed each of the six recommendations to improve and enhance the student-athlete experience made by CSS in its report, along with the actions taken by, and ongoing efforts of, UHM Athletics to address them; drew attention to various methodologies being used to ameliorate communications between UHM Athletics, the various athletic programs, and student-athletes; and highlighted some statistics related to the use of RealResponse, a platform which encourages open communication and serves as a resource for student-athletes to provide safe and secure feedback to the athletic department through anonymous reporting.

Regent Higaki arrived at 2:07 p.m.

Kelly Hee, Lead Therapist of Athletics, expounded upon proactive, reactive, and preventative initiatives undertaken by UHM Athletics to meet the mental-health needs of its student-athletes including, among other things, the hiring of herself as a full-time mental health and wellness counselor, as well as additional mental health staff, the establishment of an holistic mental healthcare program for the UHM Athletics 'ohana called Rainbow Wellness, the formation of collaborative partnerships to address some of the more unique mental-health situations faced by student-athletes, and the cultivation of a culture among student-athletes, coaches, and staff to promote mental health care awareness. She also noted the initiation of annual mental health screenings for all student-athletes; presented data on the use of Rainbow Wellness over the first ten months of the program's existence; and called attention to UHM Athletics being in accord with all of the currently existing National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) mental health best practices.

Regent Akitake inquired about mental-health appointment wait times experienced by student-athletes as noted in the student-athlete survey and asked if this data was collected prior to the expansion of mental-health staff at UHM Athletics. She also questioned whether mental-health staff were able to see student-athletes in an emergency situation. Ms. Hee stated that wait times for mental-health appointments can vary depending on the time of year, the number of student-athletes on campus during a given period, and the timeliness of a student-athlete's filling-out of the necessary forms to obtain mental-health services. In general, mental-health staff will respond to a request for services within 48 hours of it being received and makes every attempt to schedule an appointment within one-to-two weeks of the request. It was also confirmed that the information regarding mental-health appointment wait times as found in the survey was based upon responses collected prior to UHM Athletics's increase in mental-health staff. With respect to the provision of emergency mental-health services,

Ms. Hee replied that, while the ability to respond to these types of situations does exist, the system currently in place was not intended to be an on-call service. Nevertheless, UHM Athletics continues to discuss how it should proceed in addressing this matter.

Vice-Chair Haning and Ms. Hee engaged in a conversation on the options available to student-athletes wishing to seek mental-health services outside of the university system with Ms. Hee stating the main goal of UHM Athletics and its mental-health team is to ensure student-athletes receive the help they need regardless of the source of this assistance.

Board Chair Lee sought clarification as to whether the monthly statistics on the utilization of Rainbow Wellness included duplicated counts. Ms. Hee responded in the affirmative.

Referencing the appointment wait times mentioned above, Regent Faumuina asked about the adequacy of personnel resources to address the mental health needs of student-athletes at UHM. Ms. Hee stated that, in an ideal world, there would be a greater number of individuals employed by UHM Athletics to attend to the mental-health needs of student-athletes, particularly given the proactive and preventative measures being taken to deal with this issue.

Regent Miyahira questioned if there were any trends in the type of mental health issues for which student-athletes were seeking assistance. Ms. Hee commented on a surprising uptick in the seriousness of the mental-health situations facing student-athletes, some of which have required significant amounts of intervention or even hospitalization. She also stressed the need for ongoing education among faculty, staff, and student-athletes with respect to issues involving athletic mental health.

Scott Sinnett, Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), presented historical context to the creation of the Student-Athlete Annual Fall Survey (Survey) stating it was initially designed to capture student-athlete views on the CSS report and UHM Athletics' response to the report's recommendations but has since been revised to capture information about the overall student-athlete experience at UHM. He then reviewed parameters and statistics relative to the Survey such as the timeframe in which it was conducted, the total number of student-athletes who took part in it, and demographics associated with the academic classification of the respondents; went over the Survey's results, delving into and discussing the various responses received for each of the questions posed; highlighted some of the positive feedback, as well as concerns and challenges, conveyed by student-athletes by way of the Survey; and pointed out plans to distribute this year's Survey to student-athletes within the next several weeks. He also spoke about the roles and responsibilities of the FAR, an NCAA mandated position for every institution of higher education with intercollegiate athletics programs.

Regent Faumuina inquired about the methodology used to distribute the Survey to student-athletes. Dr. Sinnett stated the Survey was created using an anonymous Google form and distributed to student-athletes via multiple, repeated email notifications. Coaches also reminded student-athletes in their respective programs about the Survey.

Referencing the responses to Survey questions specific to the academic well-being of student-athletes, Regent Faumuina asked if the number of individuals who were facing significant difficulties with their studies and in need of help could be higher than what was reported, particularly since some students do not check their emails regularly or have limited access to emails. He also questioned whether student-athletes should be mandated to complete the Survey so as to get a better response rate. Dr. Sinnett replied that the number of student-athletes experiencing significant academic struggles could very well be higher than the numbers reported, although he was unsure if email accessibility was a barrier to individuals completing the Survey stating this was something which would need to be assessed further. As for requiring student-athletes to take the Survey for the purposes of increasing the response rate, Dr. Sinnett was of the opinion that this would not be an effective means of securing accurate data but indicated the sending of additional emails, or even text messages, to remind individuals about the Survey, or utilizing alternative methods of communication with student-athletes, such as the Teamworks Now app currently used by UHM Athletics, may serve as a better means of increasing Survey responses.

Regent Abercrombie inquired about the Survey's accounting for racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, or other, similar kinds of student-athlete backgrounds since this could have an impact on the way an individual copes with a particular situation. Dr. Sinnett replied that the Survey did not capture this type of information given its intent to capture a more general snapshot of the overall student-athlete experience at UHM. In light of this response, Regent Abercrombie shared his belief in the need for individuals assisting student-athletes with matters related to mental-health, academics, and so on to have backgrounds beyond their specific areas of expertise considering the diversity of student-athletes at UHM's athletic programs, as well as the unique issues each may be facing.

Regent Miyahira asked if consideration has been given to sharing the Survey with other campuses with athletic programs such as the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UHH). Dr. Sinnett stated he had not thought about this idea since the Survey was initially developed to address the situation at UHM which was brought to light through the CSS assessment. However, he communicates with FARs at other institutions of higher education throughout Hawai'i and in the Big West and Mountain West conferences and would be more than willing to make the Survey available for use by these institutions as a resource to analyze the needs of their respective student-athletes.

Chair Tochiki invited Dr. Sinnett to briefly speak about his involvement in the events leading up to the commissioning of the CSS assessment along with more recent matters involving concerns raised by the Wahine Track and Field team. She also asked if there was any improvement in addressing these types of situations since the release of the CSS report. Dr. Sinnett recounted his connection to the incidents which resulted in the administration hiring a third-party to conduct an assessment of UHM Athletics stating he was approached by some football players who wanted to voice their concerns about the program. He also expressed his sentiments on the impact miscommunication and communication breakdowns had on driving the situation to the point where the assessment became necessary. As for the issues raised by members of the Wahine

Track and Field Team, Dr. Sinnett stated he was not made aware of the student-athletes' concerns until later in the process mainly because many of these individuals chose to utilize other avenues and resources available to them for assistance first. He stated that, in his opinion, this was a sign of positive growth in communications between UHM Athletics and student-athletes. He also stressed the importance of quick and consistent communication between student-athletes, coaches, staff, and UHM Athletics to assuage any concerns brought forth by an individual, as well as, to the greatest extent possible, swiftly acting upon an issue once it is brought to light. AD Angelos added that recent discussions between himself, coaches, and members of the Wahine Track and Field Team appear to indicate student-athletes are in a better place than they were a year ago.

Vice-Chair Haning questioned whether student-athletes from different sports experienced any disparities in the addressing of concerns brought forth or the receipt of needed assistance. Dr. Sinnett replied that, while perceptions concerning the needs of larger athletic programs and student-athletes within those programs being acted upon with greater urgency may exist, he did not have any hard data on this issue.

Olivia Davies, Kendall Kaelin, and Logan Taylor offered their insights into the current state of affairs within UHM Athletics from the student-athlete perspective and shared their thoughts on some of the actions taken by UHM Athletics in response to the CSS report's recommendations, particularly with respect to improvement in communications with student-athletes.

Noting Ms. Davies is currently pursuing a graduate degree in social work and presently serves as an intern under Ms. Hee, Regent Faumuina posed a similar query to the one asked earlier in the meeting pertaining to the adequacy of mental health resources in UHM Athletics. Like Ms. Hee, Ms. Davies stated UHM Athletics could always use more personnel to attend to the mental health needs of student-athletes. She also shared her thoughts on the needs of student-athletes with regard to mental health and the stigma which can sometimes be associated with seeking this kind of assistance.

Chair Tochiki asked Ms. Kaelin whether she thought the Wahine Beach Volleyball Team was provided with adequate resources. Ms. Kaelin responded in the affirmative. Although transportation to off-site cross-training sites can be an issue for some student-athletes, she stated the coaches ensure every member of the team is provided with a ride to these destinations.

Regent Abercrombie inquired if there were any insurance or liability implications related to the use of off-site locations for cross-training and practices by some of the university's athletic programs. Lois Manin, Associate AD (AAD) at UHM Athletics, stated insurance coverage is provided for all of the university's student-athletes traveling to and from sanctioned off-site practices, training, or competitions. AD Angelos also mentioned the use of university vans to transport various athletic teams and players to these events.

Chair Tochiki asked about the source of funding for transportation costs, particularly with regards to the Wahine Track and Field Team given the temporary loss of its practice field during construction of a new facility. AAD Manin stated UHM Athletics generally finances athletics-related transportation costs. However, when a team is displaced from its practice location due to things like construction of a new facility, the costs for transporting the team to off-site training areas is considered a project related cost and gets paid for by the Office of the Vice President for Administration.

Mentioning the impetus behind her suggestion to AD Angelos about assembling a women's leadership group, Regent Akitake requested Ms. Erika Huddle, the individual in charge of performing this task, be called upon to share an update on the creation of this body. Ms. Huddle briefly spoke about the rationale for establishing the women's leadership group and mentioned meetings held between herself, Regent Akitake, and AD Angelos to discuss this matter. She noted her involvement in groups concerned with empowering women which were external to the university; offered remarks on the ability of the women's leadership group to serve as a space for issues affecting females in athletics to be brought to the fore and proactively discussed and addressed, along with the need to empower more women in athletics; and stated the types of activities currently being contemplated by the organization are geared towards educating female student-athletes about empowerment, advocating for themselves, and leadership prospects. Regent Akitake also shared her thoughts on the formation of the women's leadership group, along with the impact it could have on women's athletics at UHM, and thanked AD Angelos and Ms. Huddle for their efforts in this matter.

B. Athletics Academic Progress Report

Kula Oda, AAD for Athletics at UHH (UHH Athletics), reported on the academic performance of UHH student-athletes for Academic Year (AY) 2023-2024 highlighting several record-breaking achievements in addition to numerous earned honors and awards. He also presented data, broken down by sport, on Grade Point Averages (GPAs) achieved by UHH student-athletes over the last three years along with student-athlete academic success rates, retention rates, and graduation figures.

Mentioning information he received from external sources about several student-athletes from Japan on the UHH Men's Soccer Team being represented by agents, Regent Miyahira asked if this was a growing trend in intercollegiate athletics. AAD Oda expressed his belief that the agents to which Regent Miyahira was referring were recruiting agents and stated it was normal for international student-athletes to utilize the services of an agency to assist them with the processes for obtaining a post-secondary education, athletic scholarships, and the like at an institution of higher education in the United States.

Roxanne Levenson, AAD of Student-Athlete Services, reported on several initiatives being undertaken by UHM Athletics to continue to improve upon student-athlete academic performance and sustain the upward trend being experienced in student-athlete and team GPAs which include, among other things, the maintenance of current Academic Services Department staffing levels and the creation of a new hybrid Academic Advisor-Learning Specialist position. She also went over data on UHM

student-athlete GPAs for the last eight years; highlighted numerous academic successes, as well as individual and team academic honors and awards, attained in AY 2023-2024; and provided a synopsis of UHM Athletics' graduation success rate, federal graduation rate, and academic performance rate drawing attention to the comparable performance of UHM student-athletes and the UHM student body with respect to single year and multi-year graduation rates based upon the latest data available for the applicable student cohorts.

Regent Wilson asked about the provision of tutoring and other services aimed at assisting UHM student-athletes obtain a degree from the university. AAD Levenson responded that the goal of Academic Services Department is to ensure all of UHM's student-athletes graduate and experience success in life. In order to achieve this goal, the Academic Services Department does provide student-athletes with tutoring and academic advising services. Additionally, the Department offers a peer mentoring program to assist student-athletes with their educational needs. Mid-term semester grade checks are also conducted to determine whether a student-athlete needs extra help academically and all student-athletes are subject to certain study hall requirements based upon academic performance.

C. Athletics Health and Safety Report

AAD Oda began by stating the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes is the highest priority for UHH Athletics. He then reported on 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; 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; went over data related to concussions experienced by student-athletes over the past three years; and talked about UHH Athletics' electrocardiogram (EKG) screening program for all student-athletes.

Regent Wilson suggested the concept of developing a partnership with the excellent nursing program at UHH to assist with performing EKGs on student-athletes which, in his view, would be beneficial to UHH Athletics and provide practicum experience for the nursing students. AAD Oda stated this was a great idea referencing the large number of healthcare professionals from the community who assist UHH Athletics with this endeavor.

Jonathan Sladky, M.D., UHM's head team physician, remarked that, similar to UHH Athletics, UHM Athletics stresses the importance of ensuring the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes. He reviewed the NCAA's newly updated mental health best practices for member institutions emphasizing UHM Athletics has met each of them; discussed several initiatives undertaken to address the issue of mental health among UHM student-athletes, many of which were touched upon earlier by Ms. Hee, including the Rainbow Wellness Program; noted efforts by UHM Athletics to increase mental health awareness among student-athletes, coaches, and staff; spoke about the

addition of a full-time sports scientist to the UHM Athletics staff in 2023 to work on a variety of performance measures designed to improve the physical and mental health of student-athletes; and pointed out the creation of a high performance committee to work on communication and collaboration among all of the individual disciplines involved in student-athlete health, wellness, and performance. He also provided statistics on concussions experienced by UHM student-athletes by sport over the past five years, noting the figures for the 2023-2024 Academic Year, while slightly lower, are comparable to the number of concussions seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; stated concussion treatment protocols adhered to by UHM Athletics are in accordance with all NCAA guidelines and recommendations; and went over some of the collaborative efforts undertaken by UHM Athletics to broaden the scope of concussion treatment training received by athletic trainers and provide increased access to more advanced options to treat specific concussion symptoms.

Regent Wilson reiterated the thoughts he expressed earlier in the meeting about the practice of utilizing students enrolled in various healthcare programs at the university to assist the athletic department with its mental health and well-being initiatives, specifically making reference to the kinesiology program in the College of Education and programs within the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). He stated this would be mutually beneficial on both the academic as well as athletic sides of the equation and asked if such collaborative efforts have been explored by UHM Athletics. Dr. Sladky replied that the athletic department does try to engage and collaborate with different healthcare programs at UHM noting partnerships which have already been established, or are currently being looked at, with JABSOM and the kinesiology, psychology, and social work programs, and is something it will continue to do. He also concurred with Regent Wilson stating these collaborations afford students with a hands-on educational experience while benefitting UHM Athletics by assisting the department in achieving the goals of its health initiatives.

Stating the NCAA's mental health best practices mentioned by Dr. Sladky will more than likely be mandated in the future, Regent Paloma questioned whether the NCAA was, or would be, providing any sort of financial resources to the university to carry out its mental health initiatives. Dr. Sladky stated he was unaware of any financial support being provided or planning to be provided by the NCAA with regards to mental health surveys, analysis of mental health data, mental health staffing, and so on. However, he did note the NCAA has established insurance requirements for member institutions and recently created a post-eligibility insurance program which provides additional insurance coverage for athletically related injuries sustained during participation in an NCAA qualifying intercollegiate sport for up to two years after a student-athlete separates from school or voluntarily withdraws from their athletic program.

D. Athletics Facilities Update

AAD Oda spoke about several recently completed athletic facilities projects at UHH including the soccer field/softball field/multipurpose building project, renovations to the outdoor tennis courts and the athletic training room, and the repair and refinishing of the floor in the Vulcan Gymnasium. He also went over some of the future priority projects for UHH Athletics which consist of improvements to the gymnasium's associated locker

rooms and team rooms and the weight room/fitness facility. It was noted the upgrading of facilities at UHH will be beneficial to the recruitment and retention of top-tier student-athletes and the improvement of the overall campus-life experience.

Regent Abercrombie inquired about the sufficiency of \$7.5 million to improve and renovate the weight room and fitness facility at UHH. AAD Oda stated the original wish list for items to include in the renovation plans for the weight room and fitness facility amounted to roughly \$15 million. However, due to the limited amount of monies available, UHH Athletics had to rescope the project and only include items which were a priority need. In view of this response, Regent Abercrombie voiced his support for exploring the possibility of obtaining supplemental funding for this project.

AD Angelos presented an update on UHM athletic facilities reviewing a number of projects including the construction of a track and field/soccer complex on the upper practice field, the first phase of which broke ground in October 2023 with completion slated for January 2025; the installation of photovoltaic panels on gym 1 and 2; and replacement of the turf at Les Murakami Stadium which is projected to start in October 2024 and be completed by January 2025. He also spoke about plans for improving the batting cages at Les Murakami Stadium and mentioned efforts to update SimpliFi Arena at Stan Sheriff Center currently in the queue, including renovations to the men's and women's volleyball locker rooms and the facility's dome, and the upgrading of electronic signage.

Referring to the batting cage project, Board Chair Lee asked if these batting cages were on UHM's lower campus. He also questioned whether repairs to the dome of the SimpliFi Arena at Stan Sheriff Center simply involved the replacement of exterior panels. AD Angelos responded that the batting cages are located in the vicinity of the Les Murakami Stadium and, although still usable, are worn and dated. As for the repairs to the dome of the SimpliFi Arena at Stan Sheriff Center, AD Angelos stated he did not have information on hand about the specific techniques involved in fixing the leak in the roof at the facility.

Regent Abercrombie inquired about the status of the facilities master plan for lower campus and asked whether a report on this matter would be presented in the near future. AD Angelos replied that the consultant hired to develop a facilities master plan for lower campus has completed its work and issued a report. He stated UHM Athletics can present the report's findings and recommendations at a time determined by regents to be most convenient, although it was pointed out that some aspects of the report are still going through a final vetting by the university's facilities team. He also stressed the master plan was associated with UHM Athletics' long-term vision and desires for athletic facilities on UHM's lower campus, a vision in the area of the next 40 years.

A brief discussion ensued on the facilities master plan, its consideration of the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District project, and the board committee with jurisdiction over this matter.

President Lassner emphasized the lengthy and complex process ahead with respect to addressing any of the abovementioned master plan's findings or recommendations,

some of which may entail a complete remake of UHM's lower campus. As such, it could be several years before work on any project bears fruit.

E. Committee Work Plan

Chair Tochiki went over the table of Committee Goals and Objectives for AY 2024-2025 contained within the materials packet noting it is meant to serve as an outline of the work to be performed by the committee during the year. She stated it was a living document which may be modified as needed and asked committee members if they had any questions or comments. None were raised.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Tochiki adjourned the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Lau
Executive Administrator and Secretary
of the Board of Regents