**THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

**THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

#### Minutes of the Athletics’ Committee

The Athletics’ Committee met on April 21, 2022, in Ballroom B of the Festival and Student Center. The meeting was called to order at 2:51 p.m. by Vanessa Evans-Grevious, Chair.

# Present:

Evans-Grevious, Vanessa, Chair

Herod, Maribeth

Jankowski, Maria

Rothenberger, John

Welburn, Craig

## Others:

Alger, Jonathan, President

Ryan, Felicity, SAAC President

Burgess, Brad, Assistant A.D. for Internal Development

Crawford, Meredith, Assistant A.D. for Student-Athlete Leadership

Gorton, Eric, University Media Relations Coordinator

Knight, Jack, University Counsel

Phillips, Jennifer, Senior Associate A.D. for Student-Athlete Development/SWA

Polglase, Geoffrey, Deputy Director of Athletics

Renkin, Scooter, Assistant A.D. – Major Gifts Officer

Wood, Cliff, Senior Associate A.D. for Development

She then called for a motion to approve the minutes. It was moved by John Rothenberger and seconded by Maribeth Herod to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2022, meeting of the Athletics’ Committee. Ms. Evans-Grevious acknowledged that this would be her final meeting as Athletics’ Committee Chair and thanked the committee for its service and partnership.

**Sports Update**

Jennifer Phillips, Associate A.D., Student-Athlete Development/SWA, recognized Head Coach, Dane Pedersen, Swimming, on his ECAC Coach of the Meet honor and related team accomplishments from this past season. Coach Pederson addressed the Athletics’ Committee and highlighted his team’s past success and noted the resiliency of his student-athletes. He acknowledged that it was a special year that offered “unique challenges” while still dealing with COVID and the transition to the Sun Belt, and the CAA’s decision to preclude his team’s ability to participate for its fifth-straight CAA Championship. Winning the ECAC Championship made Swim and Dive the first JMU sports program to “five-peat”—win five consecutive championships (4-CAA; 1-ECAC). Geoff Polglase, Deputy Director of Athletics, acknowledged the leadership of Athletics’ Committee Chair, Vanessa Evans-Grevious, and thanked her on behalf of Mr. Bourne and the entire department for her leadership as the Committee’s Chair and to the institution as a whole. Mr. Polglase then presented a Sports Update. JMU teams have compiled a 166-121-2 cumulative record for a .578 winning percentage. The current .646 winning percentage in men’s sports is JMU’s best since at least 2011. Forced out of the CAA Championship, Swimming & Diving competed in the 19-team, open ECAC Championships and captured their fifth consecutive team title in a championship meet; sophomore Jess Payne Swimmer of the Meet. Five Dukes qualified for the NCAA Zone A diving meet. Men’s golf will compete as individuals in the CAA Championships this weekend in Dataw Island, S.C. Women’s golf competed as individuals in the CAA Championship, highlighted by sophomore, Amelia Williams, finishing sixth. As a team, JMU shattered its season-long team scoring average record with a 293.03 (+5.43) to top the previous mark of 301.52 (+13.52). Kendall Turner (73.24), Kate Owens (74.12) and Amelia Williams (74.21) established the three lowest single-season scoring averages in JMU history. Women’s Tennis finished 9-11 after the Dukes significantly increased their strength of schedule with the CAA automatic bid opportunity removed. Men’s Tennis posted its best season since 1990, going 14-6 overall, highlighted by No. 1 singles Holden Koons going 18-2 in singles matches. Having lost the bulk of its offense and top starting pitcher from the 2021 WCWS team, softball sits at 18-21 after opening the season ranked as high as 17th nationally. The Dukes are tied for third in the CAA. Lacrosse sits at 11-4 overall with an active eight-game winning streak, which included knocking off top-five ranked Maryland on the road. Molly Dougherty was named to the preseason top-50 watch list for the Tewaaraton Award, and Isabella Peterson was added to the list mid-season. JMU is in first in the CAA and ranked 11th. Baseball sits at 20-17 and sits in sixth place in the CAA. The indoor track & field season concluded with JMU placing sixth at the ECAC Championships with six All-East honors earned. Individually, Rachel Lloyd set the program’s pole vault record and Erica Moolman matched it later at the ECAC Championships. Holly Mpassy also set the 400-meter record at ECACs. The Hall of Fame Class of 2022 was announced in January, with a group that includes: standout swimmer (1997-2001) and coach (2004-2013) Samantha Smith Barany; former women's basketball head coach Kenny Brooks (2003-2016) and one of his star athletes, Dawn Evans (2007-2011); football quarterback Rodney Landers (2005-2008), long-time women's soccer head coach Dave Lombardo (1990-2017), baseball catcher Jake Lowery (2009-2011), track runner Anthony Wallace (2000-2003) and golfer Jay Woodson (2000-2004). The 2022 Class will be inducted on September 9, 2022, at the JMU Festival Conference and Student Center. Kylie Moulin (women’s tennis) and Anthony Piccolino (baseball) were honored as CAA Institutional Scholar-Athletes for the year, and Carly Lyvers (women’s golf) was one of two CAA student-athletes selected to attend the NCAA Student-Athlete Leadership Forum in November in Houston. Following questions from Committee Members, Mr. Polglase concluded his update.

**Title IX Participation Report**

Jennifer Phillips, Associate A.D., Student-Athlete Development/SWA, provided a summary of the recent Title IX review conducted within the JMU Athletics Department. Ms. Phillips reported that overall, that the JMU Athletics program should be commended with its efforts to fully comply with Title IX requirements. She recognized that the coaches continue to do a great job managing their respective rosters and despite financial challenges, make accommodations where they are able. In Academic Year 2021-2022, Ms. Phillips reported that JMU met the requirements of Title IX Compliance Test 1, regarding providing proportional participation opportunities for males and females with respect to their overall enrollment in the University, and that the Department should continue to follow its current Roster Management Plan and monitor enrollment rates. All men’s and women’s teams had student athletes to attend summer school and receive athletic financial assistance. Access to summer school and Bridge Program athletic financial assistance continues to be equivalent and based on nondiscriminatory prescribed qualifying criteria. The overall Title IX report yielded that there were no significant issues; however, progress continues on previous years’ recommendations: JMU continues to explore upgrade opportunities for the swimming and diving team and has plans for a locker room and coaches offices for field hockey to be included in the Convocation Center Facilities Update Plan, which should be completed and ready for occupancy in the Summer of 2023. Additionally, Student-Athletes and coaches interviewed stated that Social Media content and quantities had improved significantly. Further, a Director of Player Development has been hired for women’s basketball. This year, Helen Grant Consulting, the agency that conducted the Title IX review, also studied efforts relating to Diversity & Inclusion (Leadership, Infrastructure, Evaluation and Assessment, Education, and Collaboration), and applauded our Departmental efforts, noting that “It is apparent that access, diversity, inclusion, and Title IX is a concerted effort for JMU and JMU Athletics.” Review of the department’s diversity and inclusion efforts this year, stems from recent NCAA legislation which requires Athletic departments to review its diversity and inclusion efforts every four years. Internally, the Gender Equity Committee is reviewing JMU’s Transgender Policy. The department has partnership with Athlete Ally (a nonprofit LGBTQ athletic advocacy group based that focuses on making athletic communities more inclusive and less discriminatory and helping athletes to advocate for LGBTQ equality), to help better publicize JMU Athletics equality efforts. JMU Athletics currently follows the NCAA’s Transgender Policy. Following questions from the Committee, Ms. Phillips concluded her update.

**Student-Athlete/SAAC Update**

Meredith Crawford, Assistant A.D., Student-Athlete Leadership Program, and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) President, Felicity Ryan (Women’s Diving), provided an overview of SAAC’s priorities and sponsored initiatives with various local organizations, including Greeters at local elementary schools, Trick or Treat on Greek Row, Dental Supplies Drive, Blue Ridge Area Food Drive, Angel Tree w/ Salvation Army, Letters to First Responders, American Cancer Society Relay for Life, Out of the Darkness Walk, Open Doors Homeless Shelter, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and On the Road Collaborative. Ms. Ryan shared her goal as President of SAAC, to further foster Togetherness and Unity among student-athletes and discussed ways in which student-athletes are addressing areas of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Mental health. Through Duke’s Let’s Talk, and Dukes LEAD events, in addition to recently-established Affinity Support groups, the celebration of Black History Month through Social Media, creating a Unity Pledge and developing a Diversity Equity & Inclusion Statement and corresponding video, student-athletes have found ways to both celebrate differences and unify as one. Additionally, efforts have been made to “Build Back Community” and more closely unite student-athletes with their peers here at JMU. Ms. Ryan spoke of the excitement surrounding next week’s Student-Athlete Gala which will be a night of celebration and fellowship for all JMU student-athletes. Mrs. Crawford then provided an update on the Student-Athlete Leadership Program, highlighting various Workshops (which average roughly 200 student-athletes at each workshop) and guest speakers offered this year as well as noting new enhancements to the Program, including the addition of second fulltime staff member in Jake Van Roekel, the establishment of the Leadership Academy and the creation of the Canvas Professional Toolkit. Further, the creation of the JMU Athlete Network, various Affinity Groups, and a focus on Student-Athlete Stories, provides additional resources to better grow and support our student-athletes. Community service continues to be performed at a very high caliber—currently, over 6,445 hours of community service have been performed by student-athletes and the athletics department. Goals for FY 23 were discussed, including finding ways to allow student-athletes to participate in study abroad opportunities. President Jonathan Alger, shared that the University is exploring additional study abroad opportunities, which offer shorter windows of participation; a model that would make it more conducive for a student-athlete with limited availability to participate in such an experience. Following questions from Committee Members, Mrs. Crawford concluded the update.

**Development Update**

Cliff Wood, Senior Associate A.D., Development, provided a fundraising update. While there is still work to be done, the Duke Club is making traction. The Annual Fund is up over $800K year-over-year, and over $600K vs FY19, which was the last non-COVID impacted year, and is currently on pace for a record setting year. Total Donor Count is up versus the pandemic years, but still lags FY19 and FY18. Overall Athletics Fundraising is up over $375K versus FY21 and down about $9K versus FY19. Currently, there are roughly 3,240 donors, and giving by alums, continues to be low at roughly 5.2%. Following a discussion on the importance of creating a culture of philanthropic giving while students are here at JMU, Mr. Wood concluded his update. Mr. Polglase then shared with the Committee that Cliff Wood will be retiring at the end of June, 2022, and that the Duke Club and Ticket Office is currently restructuring.

**FBS Transition**

Geoff Polglase, Deputy Director of Athletics, provided a brief update on JMU’s transition to the Sun Belt Conference. The Sun Belt Conference Senior Staff visited JMU last week for an “orientation” to prepare for JMU’s move to the SBC. The SBC Staff met with various areas within Athletics to discuss expectations as well and SBC policies and procedures. Multiple sports are not included in the Sun Belt Conference; lacrosse will join the American Athletic Conference for 2022-2023. Field hockey will compete as an independent for the 2022 season. Swimming & diving remains to be announced, however, is currently exploring the Coastal Collegiate Sports Association (CCSA) as a potential home. Earlier this month the Sun Belt announced the addition of men’s soccer to the conference, giving the JMU men’s program a home. Mr. Polglase shared that the 2022-2023 Football Schedule has been released with the Dukes opening up on September 3, against non-conference Middle Tennessee University. Mr. Polglase concluded his update by once more thanking Mrs. Evans-Grevious for her leadership as the Athletics Committee Chair.

There being no further business, Ms. Evans-Grevious then called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Maria Jankowski and seconded by John Rothenberger. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

 Respectfully submitted,

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 Vanessa Evans-Grevious, Chair

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Donna L. Harper, Secretary to the Board