
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Athletics Committee

The Athletics Committee met on November 9, 2023, in Ballroom B of the Festival and Student Center. The meeting was called to order at 2:46 p.m. by John Lynch, Chair.

Present:

Lynch, John, Chair
Bell, Dickie
Major, Lara
Smith, Steve
White, Jack

Others:

Bell, Marcus, Coordinator, Student-Athlete Leadership Development
Bridges, Kaiden, JMU Breeze
Bourne, Jeffrey, Director of Athletics
Cannella, Abigail, Student Representative, Board of Visitors
Carter-Hoyt, Malika, Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Clements, Cassidy, Assistant A.D. for Student-Athlete Leadership (Dukes LEAD)
Gorton, Eric, University Media Relations Coordinator
Hazen, Nathan, Student Body President (SGA)
JMU IMPACT Participants
Knight, Jack, University Counsel
LaPorta, Stephen, Assistant A.D. for Compliance
Lough, Denise, Assistant A.D. for Administration and Operations
Phillips, Ty, Assistant A.D. for Facilities & Events
Polglase, Geoffrey, Deputy Director of Athletics
Renkin, Scooter, Assistant A.D. for Development
Soenksen, Roger, Faculty Athletics Representative
Tambroni, Carissa, SAAC Vice President
Warner, Kevin, Assistant A.D. for Communications
Zakharova, Anastasiia, Graduate Student

Mr. Lynch then called for a motion to approve the minutes. It was moved by Jack White and seconded by Lara Major to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023, meeting of the Athletics Committee.

Sports Update

Jeff Bourne, Director of Athletics, welcomed Committee members and acknowledged that given all of the recent success, it is indeed a “great time to be a Duke!” JMU teams have compiled a 53-29-13 cumulative record for a .626 winning percentage. Football sits at 9-0 and first place in the Sun Belt East at 6-0. The Dukes climbed to No. 21 in the AP Poll and No. 21 in the Coaches Polls on October 29. Multiple metrics rank JMU as the top Group of Five team in the country. Men’s basketball is 1-0 and was picked first in the Sun Belt preseason poll. The Dukes opened the season with a 79-76 overtime win at No. 4 Michigan State, recording just the second ranked win in program history and first since 1992. Women’s basketball is 1-1 and was picked first in the Sun Belt preseason poll. Men’s soccer sits at 8-4-5 and finished fourth in the Sun Belt. Women’s soccer sits at 9-4-8 and earned the No. 5 seed in the Sun Belt Championship. The Dukes knocked off top-

seeded and previously undefeated South Alabama in the semifinals before falling in overtime in the title game vs. Old Dominion. JMU earned an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2015 and will play No. 16 South Carolina on Friday night. Volleyball sits at 19-6 heading into the conference championship tournament and field hockey concluded its season going 5-12 as an Independent. Earlier this week, JMU sent another letter to the NCAA asking it to reconsider its waiver to reduce JMU's transition period from FCS to FBS, from two years to one year, allowing JMU to be bowl eligible for the 2023 season and also affording the opportunity for JMU to play for the Sun Belt Championship, if applicable. This "appeal" letter was an extension to the original request waiver and focused on the success of the Football program since the original filing of the waiver. JMU hopes to receive a timeline for a response later this week. After a brief discussion, Mr. Bourne then provided an update regarding our Sports Medicine Department. The department has been without a fulltime Team Physician and also without an Associate Athletics Director for Integrated Health and Sports Performance. While the positions have been advertised for quite some time, the applicant pool has not allowed us to fill these roles. On a positive note, recently, three medical fellows applied for the Team Physician position and we will review their application materials. Further, Mr. Bourne shared that he would be conducting a "listening tour" over the next two weeks in which he will individually meet with all 16 Athletics Trainers to solicit feedback and gain a better understanding of the needs of the Sports Medicine Department to help with recruiting for the Associate A.D. position. Mr. Bourne stressed that Athletic Trainers are getting harder to retain due to low salaries and the demands of the position, which leads to burnout. Following questions by the Board, Mr. Bourne concluded his update.

2022-2023 Academic Report

Jennifer Phillips, Senior Associate A.D. for Student-Athlete Development/SWA provided an update on the department's academic achievements and benchmarks. She thanked the Committee Members for their support and encouragement and also thanked Faculty Athletics' Representative, Dr. Roger Soenksen and Dr. Heather Colman, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, for their collaboration and advocacy at JMU and at the Conference level. Ms. Phillips then offered an overview of Student-Athlete Services and highlighted the services offered to Student-Athlete's, including assisting sports programs with recruiting, technology equipment check out (laptops, headphones, calculators), tutoring services, academic progress meetings with student-athletes and coaching staff, monitoring of study hall, academic screening and testing by our Educational Psychologist, academic eligibility review meetings, and communicating with Professors and Campus Offices. Ms. Phillips then transitioned into the academic success of our student-athletes which was highlighted by JMU being recently awarded the Sun Belt Conference's top academic honor with the student-Athlete Graduation Rate Award. JMU has observed itself to be a leader within the Sun Belt from an academic sense, elevating the league's academic profile. JMU student-athletes posted a single-year APR of 993 while 11 of 17 programs had a perfect 1,000 single-year score and all 17 programs hit the department benchmark of 960 or higher in the multi-year score. The department achieved an average cumulative GPA of 3.179; this was the sixth-straight year of meeting/exceeding the 3.0 threshold outlined in the University's Strategic Plan. Academic accolades from this past academic year include: 195 student-athletes being named to the University's Dean's List; 91 student-athletes making the President's List, 731 student-athletes achieving a 3.0 semester grade point average in at least one semester; 27 student-athletes achieving a 4.0 GPA during Fall 2022, and 28 student-athletes achieving a 4.0 GPA during Spring 2023 (five achieving a cumulative 4.0 GPA). Ms. Phillips then offered an overview of how JMU compared to its peers in regards to Single Year Federal Graduation Rate, Single Year Federal Success Rate, and Single Year Academic Program Rate. JMU student-athletes once again posted a higher GPA than the general student body (3.179 vs. 3.057). JMU received the NCAA revenue distribution for the third-straight year, achieving the GSR requirement with a 92. Following a discussion by the Committee Members, Ms. Phillips concluded her update.

Student-Athlete Engagement: Facility Impact – New Convocation Center

Ty Phillips, Assistant A.D. for Facilities and Events, provided an overview of the recently-renovated Convocation Center, which included the transformation of over 110,000 square feet. The renovation offers a centralized location to 150+ student-athletes from eight sports programs (Cross-Country, Field Hockey, Lacrosse, Men’s Soccer, Women’s Soccer, Volleyball, and Track and Field—indoor and outdoor) and includes the following upgrades: a broadcast infrastructure that includes ESPN+ and offers connectivity to AUBC control room, convenient parking for coaches, staff, student-athletes and patrons attending volleyball; an alternate configuration for three Volleyball practice courts; training space for indoor track and field, including pole vault, high jump, and a jump pit; locker rooms for eight sports programs, coaches’ offices, academic advising spaces, sports medicine, strength and conditioning locations, equipment services, nutrition, and various meeting rooms. Field Hockey student-athlete and Student Athletics Advisory Committee (SAAC) Vice President, Carissa Tambroni, then spoke to the positive impact of the new Convocation Center. Miss Tambroni offered specific examples in which the renovated facility has helped elevate her full student-athlete experience. She then highlighted her role as Vice President of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and outlined the initiatives for the Committee. Miss Tambroni shared that SAAC continues to focus on mental health and developing a united student-athlete voice. Goals for the new year include increased community service, diversity and inclusion engagement and the fostering of stronger connections to promote the full student-athlete experience. Following questions and comments from the Committee, Miss Tambroni concluded her presentation.

Development Update

Scotter Renkin, Associate Athletics Director for Development, provided a fundraising update. The Duke Club is trending in a great direction after a record breaking FY23. Donor Number as of October 20, 2023 is 2,563, up 200+ donors from last year. The Annual Fund sits at \$694,400 and total Fundraising efforts are at \$704,814. The “Diggin Dukes” Campaign will take place on November 28, which will highlight our restricted giving funds and has aspirational goals of gaining 2,000 donors and raising over \$600,000. Fiscal Year 24 goals include raising \$4.8M to the Annual Fund and securing 6,000 donors. An end of year Giving Campaign will ramp up for these last two months of 2023 in addition to several Major Gift Commitments being paid by December 31, 2023. Following questions from the Committee, Mr. Renkin concluded his update.

Mr. Bourne thanked guests from JMU’s IMPACT Leadership Program for their attendance at the meeting. He then concluded the Athletics Committee meeting by asking Committee members for feedback concerning future agenda items they would like to be considered.

There being no further business, John Lynch, Chair, then called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Dickie Bell and seconded Steve Smith. The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lynch, Chair

Donna L. Harper, Secretary to the Board