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**THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

**Minutes of the Athletics Committee**

The Athletics Committee met on February 9, 2023, in Ballroom B of the Festival and Student Center. The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m. by John Lynch, Chair.

**Present:**

Lynch, John, Chair  
Bell, Dickie  
Major, Lara  
Tompkins Johnson, Deborah  
White, Jack

**Others:**

Angel, Mark, Assistant Vice President, Finance  
Bourne, Jeffrey, Director of Athletics  
Gorton, Eric, University Media Relations Coordinator  
Hall, Hollie, Dean of Students  
Knight, Jack, University Counsel  
LaPorta, Stephen, Assistant A.D. for Compliance  
Pass, Anthony, Associate A.D. for Integrated Health & Sports Performance  
Phillips, Jennifer, Senior Associate A.D. for Student-Athlete Development/SWA  
Polglase, Geoff, Deputy Director of Athletics  
Renkin, Scooter, Associate A.D. for Development  
Sander, Lauren, Assistant Athletics Trainer  
Soenksen, Roger, Faculty Athletics Representative  
Straughn, Cameron, Team Physician  
Warner, Kevin, Assistant A.D. for Communications  
White, Kevin, Associate A.D. for Sports Programs

Mr. Lynch called for a motion to approve the minutes. It was moved by Lara Major and seconded by Deborah Tompkins Johnson approve the minutes November 17, 2022, meeting of the Athletics' Committee.

**NCAA, Sun Belt Conference Sports Update**

Jeff Bourne, Director of Athletics, provided the Committee with an overall Sports Update. James Madison University teams have compiled a 109-48-9 cumulative record for a .684 winning percentage. Through the fall sports season, JMU sits first in the standings for The Bubas Cup, which is awarded by the Sun Belt to the best overall institution for competitive success, as measured by Sun Belt-sponsored sports. Media coverage of JMU football quickly validated the relevancy gained by playing FBS football. Over the course of the full 2022 season, JMU generated nearly 12,000 media mentions for a total publicity value of \$24.1 million. Men's

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basketball sits at 17-8, tied for third in the Sun Belt and the Women's program is 18-6 and tied for second in conference play, with just over a month left in the regular season. Mr. Bourne then provided an update from the recent NCAA Convention. The NCAA Transformation Committee will be liquidated and new committees will be formed to track recommendations and guide future work, with an emphasis on holistic Student-Athlete support; the goal will be to create legislation that is consistent with the commitments being required in Transformation Committee report as well as work with subcommittees on Congressional Engagement and Action. Further, newly-formed committees will continue work in the areas of medical coverage for student-athletes post-graduation, and will explore other support services for student-athletes, including additional scholarship opportunities. There is a continued investment in student-athlete mental health and the NCAA has requested that all institutions designate a mental health person to Athletics specifically. JMU, in collaboration with the University, has already implemented many mental-health-related efforts, beyond those recommended by the NCAA. Further, the recent Convention highlighted the future of the Academic Enhancement Fund, which has increased substantially and provides a valuable source of revenue for institutions that meet the academic criteria. Mr. Bourne recognized Senior Associate A.D. for Student-Athlete Development/SWA, Jennifer Phillips, and Faculty Athletics Representative, Roger Soenksen, for their ongoing commitment to JMU student-athletes' academic success, as we continue to perform at a very high level. An overview was provided on topics discussed at the recent Sun Belt Conference winter meetings, which noted that SBC is planning to implement a Football Bowl Playoff series in Fall 2024; the Conference is currently evaluating bowls for possible inclusion. JMU is continuing to work through the NCAA Waiver process, which requires an institution seeking to reclassify from FCS to FBS football to go through a two-year transition period; JMU is petitioning to make the transition in one year. An internal JMU Athletics group has been editing and refining the Waiver submission, and Mr. Bourne shared that he feels that JMU is a good place. The waiver will continue to be reviewed internally, including feedback from University President, Jonathan Alger, and the NCAA Legal Counsel. Mr. Bourne did acknowledge some "downsides"—the Waiver will have to be approved by NCAA representatives, many of which have previously gone through the waiver process, and also subject to Committee influence. The transfer portal, NIL, and not being bowl eligible, among other factors make JMU's situation unique and more susceptible of having its student-athletes leave the University; these factors will be referenced in advocating for the waiver. A timeline was shared for filing the waiver, which should occur in mid-March; JMU anticipates to receive an answer in August; however, Ms. Phillips acknowledged that process could feasibly be pushed to December, especially if the initiative waiver should be denied and alternative options must be pursued. Mr. Bourne shared that an update would be provided on the waiver process at the April Board meeting. Following questions and comments from Committee members, Mr. Bourne concluded his update.

### **Intercollegiate Athletics Program Report (APA Audit)**

Mark Angel, Assistant Vice President, Finance, asked if there were questions from Committee Members relating to the 2022 Intercollegiate Athletics Program Report (APA Audit); the report was shared with Committee Members prior to the meeting. Mr. Angel noted that this year's audit was conducted by Forbis, due to staffing issues, and that Forbis will likely complete JMU's

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audits, moving forward for the foreseeable future. The report presented a summary of the findings from the recent APA Audit conducted on the JMU Athletics Program; this report is required by the NCAA. In following the reporting guidelines set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the report revealed JMU's numbers; the Total Operating Revenue for FY 2022 for the Department, was roughly \$57.8M, with \$45.5M collected from student fees, while the Total Operating Expenses for FY22, were \$57.8M, with over \$10.3M providing aid to students. It was reported that JMU's Subsidy Percentage for FY22 was 60.3% (\$57.8M) falling below the 70%-subsidy threshold standard set forth by the Cox Bill for all NCAA Division I-AA Institutions. As JMU transitions to the Sun Belt Conference, its subsidy drops to 55%; the General Assembly has allowed for a five-year transition to meet the newly-defined 55% threshold. Mr. Angel shared that he is confident that JMU will be able to hit that percentage. Mr. Bourne noted that JMU would highlight that as an institution, we are held to a higher degree of financial accountability due to parameters set by the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Cox Bill, which should further showcase JMU's fiscal responsibility in lobbying for the waiver. It was reported that the Audit approved the University's reporting processes of the data, and yielded no management recommendations for the University. Mr. Angel thanked the Athletics Business Office and the University's Foundation and Finance Offices for their assistance in collecting financial information. With no questions from the Committee, Mr. Angel concluded his update.

### **Student-Athlete Disciplinary Report**

Geoff Polglase, Deputy Athletics Director, asked if there were questions from Committee Members relating to the 2021-2022 Student-Athlete Disciplinary Report; the report was shared with Committee Members prior to the meeting. The report provided a summary of the judicial violations, sanctions and disciplinary actions incurred by student-athletes for 2021-2022, as required by the General Assembly, noting that 23 judicial charges occurred over 16 student-athletes, representing eight different sports programs. The largest categories for charges were Alcohol and Failed Drug Tests. The report referenced that in addition to sanctions and disciplinary actions imposed by the Court System and JMU's Office of Student Accountability Restorative Practices (OSARP), JMU coaches have the autonomy to enforce additional penalties, including removal from the team, scholarship reductions, additional community service obligations, program suspensions, scrimmage suspensions, and team program strikes. Mr. Polglase then concluded his update.

### **Mental Health Update**

Jennifer Phillips, Senior Associate A.D., Student-Athlete Development/SWA, Anthony Pass, Associate A.D. for Integrated Health & Sports Performance, Lauren Sander, Assistant Athletics Trainer, Dr. Cameron Straughn, Team Physician, and Hollie Hall, Dean of Students, offered a Mental Health update and highlighted the collaboration efforts between the University and Athletics. Mental Health continues to be a national concern. It was shared that recent NCAA-issued surveys to student-athletes revealed that the rate of those experiencing mental health struggles is 1.5% higher than pre-pandemic, but that we cannot continue to assign mental health struggles to the pandemic and instead need to continue to seek out ways that we can further support our student-athletes. Athletics, in collaboration with the University, has developed a

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Mental Health Emergency action plan, with outlines steps to assist in the event that someone present themselves in distress. Further, it was shared that various resources are available to students through the University (i.e., Dean of Student's Office, Counseling Center, Timely Care Online virtual counseling and psychiatry and staff and faculty education and situational recognition resources. Additionally, Athletics has created specific resources that are available to its student-athletes including, clinical and sports psychology services, the CARE team, learning screenings conducted by Athletics Learning Specialist, Kathryn Litten, substance abuse counseling, and the development of Dukes Let's Talk and various student-athlete affinity groups (i.e., Medical/Exhausted Eligibility Group; Body Positive Group; Black Athlete Sister Group; Barbershop, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, International Students, and LGBTQ & Friends. Further, many of our sports programs continue to partner with organizations aimed at addressing mental health, such as the "Morgan Rogers" Foundation (Morgan's Message). A future initiative will include the development of Performance Integration Teams, which will pull together support staff that works with specific sports programs to collaborate better monitor and evaluate the mental health needs of individual athletes on a specific team. Athletics has also endorsed the Sun Belt Conference's new mental health program, Radical Health, in which JMU's SAAC Committee will serve as one of three schools in the Conference to help pilot the initiative. University and Athletics-specific Mental Health resources and trainings are also available for coaches and staff to help equip them as a potential gatekeeper and a frontline-intervention to student-athletes experiencing mental health challenges. The group also outlined the importance of differentiating between "mental health" and "mental toughness," with our student-athletes and noted that coaches and staff appear to be more attuned to having open conversations surrounding mental health with their teams. Campus resources include the Employee Assistance Program (i.e. Balanced Dukes, Counseling Center Self-Help Resources, Lean to Live online platform, and Mental Health Resource Guide for State Employees). The Athletics Department has sponsored various guest speaker and educational opportunities for both student-athletes and coaches and staff, including SafeTALK Training (suicide prevention recognition and training) and Hilinski's Hope, in collaboration with the Dukes LEAD Program. The University and Athletics both shared in their ongoing commitment to continue combating mental health and the stigmas associated with it. The Athletics Committee commended the group for their level of dedication and support to student-athletes and coaches and staff, alike. Following a discussion with Committee Members, the update concluded.

### **Development Update**

Scooter Renkin, Associate Athletic Director for Development, provided a fundraising update. Overall, JMU is trending well this Fiscal Year. Current donors are up over 1,000 donors from last year, and the Annual Fund is ahead by roughly \$215,000 from last year. Overall fundraising is currently up \$300,000 from this time last year. The Duke Club is currently at 43% of its annual fundraising goal of \$4.3M, which based upon current trending, Mr. Renkin expects us to meet if not exceed. Sport Specific Giving continues to be a priority and has seen an increase as Duke Club Development Officers are working with their respective teams to send out email solicitations. Mr. Renkin recognized Donor Officer, Ally Henchy, for her efforts in helping to establish Volleyball's first endowment this past December. Given that the Duke Club is now fully-staffed, Mr. Renkin shared that he hopes to see an increase in sport-specific-related giving.

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Many capital projects are in the works, and in turn, that number should grow over the course of the fiscal year. A full re-parking and reseating for Football will occur this Spring, which will be based upon a priority ranking system; Mr. Renkin shared that he expected to see an increase in giving by donors prior to the May 15 priority deadline in an effort by donors to better “jockey” their priority rank. Finally, Mr. Renkin reiterated the Duke Club’s aspirational goal of amassing 5,000 donors for fiscal year 2023. Following questions and comments from Committee Members, Mr. Renkin concluded his update.

At the conclusion of the formal agenda, Athletics Committee Chair, John Lynch, asked about the posture of the Missed Class Time Policy. Jennifer Phillips and Dr. Roger Soenksen, shared that the policy is still being reviewed, but that they do feel good about the proposed language. They shared that the implementation of priority registration for student-athletes was a tremendous success for Spring 2023 registration; however, without a formalized Missed Class Policy, many student-athletes were forced to withdrawal from classes as professors were unwilling to excuse them from class or offer alternative options to makeup class assignments and tests due to travel for competition. Ms. Phillips stated that the Missed Class Policy was currently being reviewed by multiple committees across campus, in addition to Department Heads. Further, the policy would need to be approved by the Faculty Senate. Ms. Phillips thanked Dr. Soenksen and the Athletics Committee for their ongoing support and shared that she is hopeful that a policy can be finalized for Fall 2023. Committee Member, Jack White, acknowledged the necessity of a policy to allow students that represent the University in an official capacity, to not be subject to academic repercussions for such participation. The Athletics Committee reaffirmed their commitment to continue advocating with the full Board of Visitors to help implement such a policy.

There being no further business, Mr. Lynch us then called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Jack White and seconded Lara Major. The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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John Lynch, Chair

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Donna L. Harper, Secretary to the Board