

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BOARD OF REGENTS

Ad Hoc Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics

Open Forums

January 28 and 29, 2002

Open forums were held on Monday, January 28, 2002 at 11:30 a.m. and Tuesday, January 29, 2002 at 4:30 p.m. by the Ad Hoc Committee on Athletics in the Boardroom, 600 McNamara Alumni Center.

Regents present: David Metzen, presiding; Jean Keffeler, and Lakeesha Ransom.

Staff present: Vice President Tonya Brown; Executive Director Ann Cieslak.

On each date, Regent Metzen called the meeting to order and introduced Vice President and Chief of Staff Tonya Brown, who has administrative responsibility for Men's Intercollegiate Athletics (MICA) and Women's Intercollegiate Athletics (WICA) programs on the Twin Cities campus. She gave a brief summary of the financial difficulties currently facing Intercollegiate Athletics and various options under consideration to remedy these difficulties and establish the future direction of Intercollegiate Athletics. A copy of the presentation is on file in the Board Office.

Metzen then explained the procedures speakers should follow and called forward the following individuals:

Joseph Massey - Chair, Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)

Professor Massey presented written statements on behalf of four entities: the Faculty Consultative Committee, the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning, the Advisory Committee on Athletics, and the Faculty Academic Oversight Committee for Intercollegiate Athletics. Massey acknowledged the value of intercollegiate athletics to university life, but stated that an annual subsidy of \$10 million from institutional operating funds is excessive given the University's priorities and academic values. The amount should be reduced to align with other public universities in the Big Ten. In addition, he stressed the importance of protecting existing commitments to student-athletes and preserving support services, of remaining in compliance with National Collegiate Athletic Association and Big Ten rules and regulations, and of meeting or exceeding Title IX requirements with respect to gender equity. He also requested that the Board seek input from faculty governance committees before making a final decision.

John Wendt - Alumnus and Sports Attorney

Mr. Wendt urged that the Men's and Women's Intercollegiate Athletics departments remain separate and that the University maintain its non-revenue sports. He suggested that the University follow the lead of other institutions, such as Penn State and the University of Iowa, by seeking permanent endowments for coaches' salaries and for position-related scholarships on athletic teams, such as starting quarterback. He also noted that it takes time to establish a new marketing product, and that WICA's marketing efforts are becoming successful, as shown by its ticket sales.

Linda Mona - Chair, Women's Athletics Advisory Council

Ms. Mona stated her strong support for both intercollegiate athletics programs, noting that she has had season tickets for many years for both men's and women's sports. She then pointed out the accomplishments of WICA and its student-athletes: a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above; a four-year graduation rate by most student-athletes; staying within the departmental budget; hosting national championship events; exceeding national averages in fundraising and endowed scholarships; increased marketing programs; and ranking near the top in the Big Ten and nationally in attendance. She added that the program, despite its relative youth, serves as a national model. She urged the University to support both the men's and the women's programs, and to focus on the following: exploring more sponsorship opportunities; refinancing the debt on athletic facilities; examining costs and overhead; seeking more scholarships; and implementing more out-of-state tuition waivers.

Gary Wilson - Women's Track Coach

Mr. Wilson noted that worries about balancing the budgets are negatively impacting athletes and coaches. He urged the University to focus on setting fundraising goals and asked for University of Minnesota Foundation support in these efforts. He also suggested that the University set a long-term goal of endowing all athletics scholarships, and that it restructure the debt service on the athletics buildings.

Harold Strassener — Minnesota Resident

Mr. Strassner discussed his daughter's attempts to become a walk-on athlete at the University of Minnesota Duluth. He commented that if people have a bad experience with the University, it is difficult to persuade them to donate money to the University.

John Cowles — Donor and Booster

Mr. Cowles noted that society has historically supported athletics as part of the educational experience and should continue to do so. Athletics provides an important focus for public pride and school spirit. Priorities need to change from athletic performance to academic performance. He pointed out that women athletes already are good students; combining both programs puts the women at risk.

Caroline Christian Dunn — Alumna and Parent of Current Student

Ms. Dunn emphasized that parents want fair and proportional sports opportunities available to their children, including intramural and non-varsity sports. Parents do pay attention to graduation rates and to what is said by elected public officials and by University administrators. She urged that women's athletics be given enough time to fully develop its revenue opportunities.

Sally Kohlstedt — Faculty Member

Professor Kohlstedt noted that the University is recognized for fostering the participation and advancement of women and women's programs, including women's athletics, adding that it was an important factor in her decision to come to the University as a faculty member. The women's athletics department emphasizes the importance of both academic and personal achievement, does its own marketing and fundraising, and serves as a model for programs nationwide. She urged that the University think closely about the success of the current program before trying to create short-term financial solutions.

Gary Olsen — Retired Sports Writer

Mr. Olsen stated that merging MICA and WICA is unnecessary because both athletic directors report to a single administrator with responsibility for both programs. He urged that the University merge training staff and facilities, decrease funding for cheerleading and band, and maintain football scholarships. He emphasized the importance of treating athletes fairly regardless of gender.

Maxine Nathanson — Alumna and Women's Athletics Advisory Council Member

Ms. Nathanson noted that she has been very actively involved in WICA from the beginning and has seen how the program has helped female student-athletes become contributing members of the community. She stressed the importance of maintaining a separate women's program.

Jean Freeman — Women's Swimming Coach and Women's Intercollegiate Athletics Head Coaches Representative

Coach Freeman commented that participation in team athletics helps female students develop the ability to set goals within specific timeframes and promotes hard work toward a team vision and loyalty to the team's success rather than solely personal success. Revenue not matching expenses is a long-standing problem for women's athletics nationwide, because women's sports do not draw media attention and large donations to the same extent as men's athletics. She stated that coaches are willing to help with efforts to cut expenses, and urged the University to keep the departments separate and to keep non-revenue sports.

Jill Johnson - Women's Athletics Advisory Council Member and President of Johnson Consulting Services

Ms. Johnson indicated that she has been working with supporters of WICA on ways to raise revenues and maximize fundraising, noting that women's sports as a marketable product is a relatively new phenomenon and needs more time to fully develop. She pointed out the success and high rankings of the University's women's athletics teams in the Big 10, and expressed her strong support of keeping women's athletics separate. She recommended the following: focusing more recruitment effort on states with tuition reciprocity, thereby saving money on expensive tuition waivers; retaining the sales tax portion of ticket sales; and refinancing the debt service on the athletic facilities.

Thomas Perry — Alumnus and University Staff Member

Mr. Perry expressed his support for funding both MICA and WICA at close to the current levels, making the following points: inefficiencies within the athletics departments need to be addressed, as is true of most departments at the University; female student-athletes have maintained an GPA of 3.0 or better for eleven years, with a graduation rate of 85%; athletics provides public recognition for the University in local and national media. He expressed his support for keeping women's athletics separate, and suggested that MICA and WICA be allowed to keep the University parking and concessions revenues generated by athletic events, particularly since football games are off-campus events.

Kwame McDonald — Fan and Sportswriter

Mr. McDonald pointed out the importance of extra-curricular activities as part of the collegiate learning experience. He recommended that the University of Minnesota work with other colleges and universities within the NCAA to decrease the number of football scholarships from 80 to 60, which would assist budgets nationwide. He voiced his opposition to merging the two departments just when women's athletics is truly beginning to come into its own. He emphasized that quality of life for students should be the driving factor, rather than money.

Kate McMillan — Carlson School Alumna and Former Women's Swim Team Member

Ms. McMillan expressed her support for separate athletics departments and for both non-revenue and revenue sports, noting that WICA has had a balanced budget for many years and that merging athletics departments does not guarantee savings. She stated that women's athletics offers leadership and community service opportunities, both at local and national levels. She emphasized that athletics is only one part of an educational experience, and wondered whether million-dollar coaching salaries were appropriate for amateur sports, given budgetary problems and limited athletics funding.

Rayla Allison — Minnesota Resident and Attorney

Ms. Allison, an attorney practicing in the area of Title IX legislation, pointed out that although improvements have been made in trying to equalize the ratio of female athletes and male athletes with their respective undergraduate population, the University needs to focus on addressing the other components of Title IX by increasing the budget for WICA. She noted that courts do not view lack of money as a valid reason for not providing mandated levels of financial support for women's athletics.

Patrick Pederson — President of Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)

Mr. Pederson remarked that graduate students feel very strongly that monies currently spent subsidizing athletics should be returned to support the University's mission of education and research by funding the libraries, laboratories, and computers necessary to maintain the University's position as the 3rd-best public research university in the nation. He added that graduate students perform the laboratory experiments and write the grant proposals that bring millions of dollars of research money to the University. He noted, however, that campus athletics helps maintain morale and a sense of community for the entire University population. Rather than cut the number of teams, he recommended the following: issue a single University athletics

pass for all non-revenue sports; move some teams from Division I to Division II; increase fundraising efforts by MICA and WICA; eliminate managerial redundancies without compromising the visibility or integrity of either athletic department; and conduct a comprehensive, in-depth analysis to determine the marketing viability of the Gopher football team. He urged Regents and the administration to take advantage of graduate students' innovative and problem-solving talents and enlist their aid in constructing new solutions to the current crisis.

Wayne Faris — Alumnus and Women's Athletics Advisory Council Member

Mr. Faris commented that he is very involved in athletics and in fundraising efforts, and urged that MICA and WICA not be merged because of fundamental differences in the culture of the programs. He pointed out that WICA is more compliant with NCAA rules and regulations and quickly explores alleged infractions; it does not have a problem with academic eligibility and is proud of its GPA of 3.0 or better and 85% graduation rate. He stressed that WICA has a strong leader in Chris Voelz and that constituencies feel they are heard.

Shannan Osborne — Student-Athlete

Ms. Osborne, who previously attended another university where both athletics departments had merged, explained that women's programs and women athletes were always "on the back burner". She transferred to the University of Minnesota because it has a separate women's athletics department that serves as a model for other schools. She noted that the women's athletics program helps student-athletes develop into strong, resourceful women by promoting leadership, integrity, respect, and academic excellence.

Deborah Olson — Women's Athletics Advisory Council Member

Ms. Olson remains involved with fundraising efforts because WICA emphasizes academic excellence and promotes qualities and skills that are important throughout life. WICA is very successful in its fundraising efforts and is a leader in ticket sales, serving as a national role model. She urged the University not to jeopardize a successful athletics department by merging the programs when the outcome of such a step is uncertain at best.

Meghan Sonstegard — Alumna and Former Student-Athlete

Ms. Sonstegard is proud of the University's history of commitment to diversity, including its commitment to women's athletics. She stated that WICA has demonstrated its fiscal responsibility by balancing its budget for the last 14 years; it should not have to bear the brunt of men's athletics fiscal mismanagement. She urged the University to reaffirm its commitment to valuing diversity by keeping the departments separate.

Priscilla Faris — Alumna and Women's Athletics Advisory Council Member

Ms. Faris stated that Women's Athletics is the University's gem: its athletes maintain a 3.0 GPA and an 85% graduation rate; it is responsible for 41.9% of all Gopher athletic endowments; and it is the only program that has five sports in the top twenty attendance records nationwide. Chris Voelz has an unwavering vision for women's athletics and provides strong and positive leadership. Ms. Faris encouraged the University to set goals for athletics generally in order to make its values and priorities clear, then decide where to make cuts. She also urged a greater focus on fundraising efforts.

Libby Sharrow — Captain, Women's Rowing Team

Ms. Sharrow praised the University for its history of valuing gender equity in its decision-making process and asked it to preserve its integrity by following the ethical and legal obligation of Title IX, so that the opportunities available to both male and female student-athletes will remain. She asked the University to consider the underlying reasons for the over-spending and to seek the least harmful solution. Folding the departments together will not necessarily solve the problem. WICA has shown itself to be fiscally responsible and has created a culture for female student-athletes where equal opportunity means equal responsibility. She urged that the University continue its commitment to the values represented by Title IX.

Ember Reichgott Junge - President, Minnesota Women's Political Caucus

Ms. Reichgott Junge informed the committee that the Minnesota Women's Political Caucus strongly supports maintaining a separate identity and autonomy for women's athletics, even if facilities and services may need to be shared. She made the following points: 1) merging the departments will never be a merger of equals, thereby marginalizing and weakening a successful women's athletics department; 2) reversing the University's strong tradition of gender equity by eliminating the

women's athletics department will send a damaging message to all Minnesotans that collegiate sports are more about making money than building self-esteem and leadership in young women; and 3) the University should not limit donor choices when the trend in the philanthropic community is to expand donor choice. She noted that WICA has raised 41.9% of the total endowment for athletics. She commented that decisions made during retrenchment say a lot about the culture and underlying integrity of an institution, and emphasized that once these decisions are made, they are rarely reversed.

Mary Louise Fellows — Faculty Member

Professor Fellows stated that in 1991 she was the first woman appointed to a University chaired professorship, and that a significant reason she came to the University was its commitment to gender equity as shown by a separate women's athletic department and other women's programs. She pointed out that WICA has a different ethos and model for pursuing intercollegiate athletic competition, as evidenced by the women's basketball scoreboard that includes the team's GPA. Merging the departments will send a message to female athletes and female faculty members that the University is no longer committed to equality, that opportunities for women to pursue excellence will be lessened, and that women's programs will be the first to be eliminated when the University faces budgetary constraints.

Regent Metzen thanked the participants and informed the audience that the comments would be forwarded to the full Board of Regents and the administration for consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

On Tuesday, January 29, 2002, Regent Metzen again called the meeting to order. After the brief presentation by Vice President Brown, he called forward the following:

Rob Nolden - Minnesota Resident

Mr. Nolden spoke in favor of the women's athletic department. He suggested that the University take a stand with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) as the first institution to propose cost reduction in revenue-generating sports. Money saved could then be used to support women's sports.

Kristen Zeller, M.D. - Alumna and Former Student-Athlete

Dr. Zeller stressed that academics and athletics are intertwined. She talked about the importance of preserving the student athlete programs, both revenue and non-revenue sports. She also indicated that the University of Minnesota and Northwestern are disadvantaged in the Big Ten because they are located in large metropolitan areas and have to compete for support with professional teams.

Peter Beniares - Constituent and Fan

Mr. Beniares spoke in support of retaining two separate athletic departments. One department is not sufficient to support the needs of both men's and women's athletics.

John Oravis - President, Women's Volleyball Booster Club

Mr. Oravis urged preservation of the current structure for men's and women's athletics. If the two departments are combined into one, he believes the women's programs will be hurt. He attributes the success of women's athletics at the University of Minnesota to the leadership of Director Voelz.

Donald Opitz - Graduate Student

Mr. Opitz does not believe that sufficient evidence has been shown in the administration's report to indicate that combining the men's and women's athletic departments will save money. Female athletes are excelling on the field and in their classrooms. Combining the two departments would endanger the success that women athletes have achieved.

Dan Kelly - President of the Minnesota Student Association (MSA)

Mr. Kelly presented the following recommendations developed by members of MSA to be considered in addressing the current athletic financial situation: a) enable students to purchase athletic tickets via the web registration system; b) allow

athletic tickets to be charged to the Student Accounts Receivable accounts; c) develop a "Gopher Student Pass"; d) call on athletic directors to develop a plan to be self sufficient; e) men's and women's athletic departments should not be merged; f) there should be more opportunities for the two departments to share resources; g) studies should be conducted on ways to better market athletics; and h) a task force should be established to examine the costs and benefits of moving some programs from Division I to Division II.

Sheila Brown - Athletic Director, College of St. Catherine

Ms. Brown stated that she would hope as Regents and administration examine the financial challenges in the athletic department, comparable scrutiny is applied University wide in the face of new state budget realities. While athletics is a very visible target, she would hope belt tightening is spread throughout the University. Ms. Brown referred to the report on athletics and stated that she hoped that the five principles articulated throughout the report continue to guide the decisionmakers as they make their decisions on the future of the athletic programs at the University of Minnesota.

Judy Mahle Lutter — Alumna and Chief Executive Officer of Melpomene Institute

Ms. Mahle Lutter spoke on behalf of the importance of separate departments for men's and women's athletics based on research over the past 20 years completed by Melpomene Institute. She spoke of the benefits of sports for girls and the importance of good female leadership for women. She strongly supports the position of the Women's Athletic Department that seeks a model which shares services and cuts costs, while preserving separate identity.

Venora Hung — Chair, Student Representatives to the Board of Regents

Ms. Hung spoke on behalf of the Student Representatives to the Board of Regents indicating that students are divided about the future of the athletic departments. She would urge the Board to listen to the student voice and assess the effects on students as decisions are made. She also indicated that the financial pressures affect the entire nation and suggested that the University also work with the National Collegiate Athletic Association on solutions to the problems.

Carol Chomsky - Faculty Member

Professor Chomsky spoke in opposition to the merging of the mens and women's athletics departments as a way to save money. While she does not know if there would be significant savings in merging, she believes merging departments would send the wrong message to all women both internal and external to the University. Separate departments honors the values of the women's program and its commitment to both academic excellence and athletic success.

Donna Olson - Former Sr. Associate Athletics Director

Ms. Olson provided some background information on progress made in women's athletics over the past 16 years and offered the following suggestions to pursue in addressing the financial issues: use of parking revenues generated by athletic events; the use of tuition waivers, assistance from the Foundation and Alumni Association, and review the costs of services that athletics pays to other University units.

Lynnette Sjoquist - Season Ticket Holder and Donor

Ms. Sjoquist provided examples relating to the athletic excellence and academic achievements of the Women's Athletic Department. She expressed hope that the University would recognize and reward those efforts and accomplishments by preserving it as a separate department.

Dana Baum - Student-Athlete

Ms. Baum stated that she chose to come to Minnesota because it had a separate Women's Athletic Department with a mission of achieving excellence. As an athlete, she would sacrifice whatever is necessary to retain separate men's and women's athletic departments.

Sarah Gleason and Jill Peters - Team Council, Women's Intercollegiate Athletics

Ms. Gleason attributes her athletic success to Director Chris Voelz and the leadership in the Women's Athletic Department. The women's athletic program is a family and the extra attention and support the department provides to students demonstrates their focus on the students. Ms. Peters added that the mission of women's athletics has been upheld - that the women are students first and athletes second.

Kurt Milholm - Alumnus

Mr. Milholm indicated that he felt the Athletic Report was confusing and that the assumptions had been made without enough information. He believes there are too few student athletes at the University of Minnesota. He would like the Board of Regents to state what it supports and let the administration manage it. He would urge the Board of Regents to support separate men's and women's athletic departments.

Marilyn Doyle - Women's Athletics Advisory Council

Ms. Doyle suggests considering creative solutions to the financial problems in athletics. She proposed a study group to include financial and organizational management experts from the Carlson School of Management to devise solutions. She suggested that an immediate decision on the issue be deferred until creative solutions can be explored.

Ann Cahoy - Former Athlete

Ms. Cahoy supports keeping the Department of Women's Athletics separate. She stated that it was a benefit to her and believes it will be a benefit to future women athletes who choose to come to the University of Minnesota. The women's department taught her that she has a voice, is a leader, and can set goals and accomplish them.

Jon Steadland - Alumnus

While Mr. Steadland believes that eliminating certain programs or combining the athletic departments will help alleviate the financial problems in athletics, he does not believe short-term options will solve the problem entirely. He believes that an on-campus football facility would be a potential revenue generator for many years to come. He opposes the concept of sharing a facility with a professional football team. He urged the University to explore whether there is the potential in the next five years to generate enough funding for a privately-financed stadium.

Judge Albert LaFontaine - Grand National Council of Confederate Nations

Judge LaFontaine suggested that the University might explore the possibility of obtaining federal funding to address the financial issues facing athletics at the University of Minnesota.

Jonda Hammons - Alumna and Former Student-Athlete

Ms. Hammons stressed values and priorities. She urged the University to: reduce spending on football and demand that the program show fiscal responsibility; continue to support non-revenue sports as the scholarships provided translate into degrees for people who might not otherwise receive them; and keep the two athletic departments separate, as the whole would not be greater than the sum of its parts.

Paul Koch - Treasurer, Golden Dunkers

Mr. Koch believes the University should focus on increasing revenues rather than cutting expenses. He spoke in favor of building a football stadium on campus using parking and concessions as sources for generating revenue.

Mary Galen O'Connor - University Staff Member

Ms. O'Connor spoke in favor of giving credits for athletics and the creation of an interdisciplinary degree between the College of Education and the Carlson School of Management. She also urged the University to cultivate a culture of honesty and to take responsibility for the athletic scandal.

Mike Hebert - Women's Volleyball Coach

Coach Hebert addressed Title IX, questioning whether female athletes in college enjoy the full range of experiences that were intended by the Title IX legislation. While Minnesota is one of only five separate women's athletic departments in the nation, he believes that the University of Minnesota is right in having two athletic departments. He urged the Board to examine carefully the potential social and moral costs of eliminating the women's athletic department.

Jason Reed - Student and President's Appointee to the University's Advisory Committee on Athletics

Mr. Reed asked that a number of issues be considered before making any determinations on the financial situation of University athletics: 1) other Big Ten schools are not fair comparisons, except for Northwestern, because they are not within major metropolitan areas; 2) consider an annual subsidization of athletics; 3) the state funding agreement between the central

administration and women's athletics department should continue to help offset the lack of revenues coming out of women's intercollegiate sports; and 4) the University should accept any "gift" from the legislature for a new on-campus Gophers football stadium - with "gift" meaning no 33% debt service attached.

Laura Slominski - Student-Athlete

Ms. Slominski talked about the importance of playing for the University of Minnesota; provided a brief history of the women's hockey program; addressed the mission statement of the Women's Athletic Department, and urged the continuation of separate athletic departments for men and women.

Carol White - University Staff Member and Alumna

Ms. White addressed ways for reducing costs and/or increasing revenues. She urged closer scrutiny of how funds are spent on athletics; the elimination of complimentary tickets for all athletic department staff; combining of men's and women's athletic departments; and the possibility of discontinuing sports that cannot be self sufficient.

Emily MacCormick - Student-Athlete

Ms. MacCormick spoke in favor of separate athletic departments. She believes the women's athletic department has provided her with the opportunity to become a strong, educated and confident woman.

Rosalie Wahl - Retired Minnesota Supreme Court Judge

Judge Wahl spoke on behalf of maintaining a separate independent women's athletic department. The women's department has been fiscally responsible and has not been the cause of the financial challenges being faced. The department should neither be forced, nor expected, to surrender its culture and identity in an effort to meet those challenges.

Shelly Miller - Student-Athlete

Ms. Miller reported on a number of conversations held with female student athletes across the country who supported the concept of separate athletic departments. She talked about the problems that female athletes face when confined under one athletic department with most of the attention being paid to the men's sports programs.

Regent Metzen thanked the individuals for their comments and assured the audience that their comments would be conveyed to the administration and the entire Board of Regents and consideration would be given to these comments and suggestions as solutions to these financial challenges are developed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

ANN D. CIESLAK
Executive Director and
Corporate Secretary

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