



# Agenda

3. Update on the SEC Charge to Review the Outcomes of the Athletics Reports – Pamela Lanford, Chair-Elect, University Senate



## Subcommittee Approach

- The subcommittee did not feel it was appropriate to second guess Dr. Walters' findings and recommendations, and felt the Athletics Action Plan contained sound actions and next steps, many of which had already been implemented.
- Our approach was to help expand upon the recommendations in each document, with the goals of ensuring the implementation of best practices in staff training and preparedness, and fostering improved transparency and accountability within the athletics program.



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Athletics Action Plan

The Athletics Action Plan describes a comprehensive set of actions, equipment, and staffing changes that are aimed at improving the policies and procedures affecting the health and safety of our student-athletes.

- We commend both the spirit and the specifics detailed in the Action Plan, and recommend that the ongoing oversight of the overall implementation of the Action Plan incorporate regular reporting to the Athletics Council (e.g., at least twice annually).



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Staff Training

The Athletics Action Plan indicates that various trainings have been performed with athletic training staff, strength and conditioning staff, and first responders, with the aim of improving knowledge and implementation of the EAP, assessing weather considerations for student-athlete health, and methods for accessing campus areas.

- If not already in place, we recommend that a regular, ongoing schedule of EAP training and renewal trainings be established, with documentation and tracking of such training available for review. Further, we recommend that methods for evaluating the effectiveness of these trainings be established, to ensure trainees are knowledgeable and prepared on an ongoing basis, and that knowledge and implementation of EAP elements be included in annual staff performance reviews.



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

The Athletics Action Plan indicates that, based on the Walters report, UMD will establish an independent review panel that will annually review procedures and protocols on student-athlete safety.

- We support this action, and recommend that such review be performed on a regular basis internally, and include a tabletop drill or other exercise to inform any needed updates and/or revision of the EAP. In addition to internal review, we recommend a periodic review of the EAP by independent external evaluators, occurring on a regular established schedule (e.g., on a bi- or triennial basis).
- The findings of both the internal and external evaluations of the EAP and EAP implementation should be presented to and reviewed by the Athletics Council and a summary of findings be available for review.



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Accountability, Reporting & Communications

The Walters report refers to the structure in which athletic trainers are employed and supervised as a modified version of the “athletic model” where UMD trainers are part of the UMD athletic department but medical supervision is provided by physicians elsewhere.

- While we understand the inclination to maintain control over hiring/firing decisions for UMD staff, we believe that contracting athletic trainers through an entity outside UMD Athletics (e.g., the “Medical Model”) is a change that would ensure that actions by athletic trainers may be completely independent of any (real or perceived) threat to their positions.



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Accountability, Reporting & Communications

The Athletics Action Plan describes the establishment of an online portal called *Terps Feedback*, which allows student-athletes to share concerns or report issues securely and in real time.

- We commend this action, but suggest that comments posted to this system be directed not only to leadership within the Athletics Department also to leadership within a separate UMD division, such as to the Vice President for Student Affairs, to ensure transparency and that effective action are taken in response. Further, we recommend that the University provides Athletics employees with a mechanism for independent and anonymous reporting of irregular, unethical, or abusive behavior (e.g., USM hotline).



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Accountability, Reporting & Communications

- In addition to this reporting system, we recommend that a dedicated student-athlete ombudsperson be established, such as is in place at Michigan State, that is outside of Athletics and is clearly an independent resource for the resolution of issues specific to the student-athlete experience.



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions: Accountability, Reporting & Communications

The Student Athlete Survey is a valuable component of evaluating in various dimensions of the climate and experience of student athletes in their respective sports programs at UMD and we commend the use of this tool.

- We recommend that data from these surveys be provided to the faculty on the Athletic Council. Such faculty are well-equipped to provide impartial assessment of the results of the survey, and to recommend actions as appropriate.



## Preliminary Comments & Suggestions

Review of the Walters report and a preliminary review of the Athletics Commission Report indicates that the structure, organization and oversight of the Athletics Department was insufficient and requires reform.

- It is clear that we must improve the accountability and oversight of the Athletics department and that personnel changes may be necessary. In this time of crisis and change, the Senate Executive Committee recognizes the critical importance of stability and consistency to chart a path forward. The challenges that the University faces require a deep understanding of our institution, our history, and our values. We believe that maintaining the current University leadership is in the best interest of the campus. Further, we believe that the engagement of faculty, staff, and students through the University Senate will be integral to the successful implementation of necessary reforms.