

The Regents of the University of California

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS**

January 23, 2024

The Special Committee on Athletics met on the above date at the UCSF–Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco campus, and by teleconference in accordance with California Government Code §§ 11133.

Members present: Regents Ellis, Hernandez, Park, Robinson, Sherman, and Tesfai; Ex officio members Drake and Leib; Chancellors Block, Christ, and May; Advisory member Steintrager

In attendance: Faculty Representative Cheung, Secretary and Chief of Staff Lyall, Deputy General Counsel Woodall, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Brostrom, Chancellors Wilcox and Yang, and Assistant Secretary Bricker

The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. with Special Committee Chair Hernandez presiding.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Special Committee Chair Hernandez explained that the public comment period permitted members of the public an opportunity to address University-related matters. The following persons addressed the Board concerning the items noted.

- A. Vanessa Cruz, UC Irvine student, stated that she is participating in a hunger strike in support of the Opportunity for All campaign. She stated that working 20 hours per week for College Corps is not enough, leading to food insecurity for undocumented students. She asked that the Regents implement Opportunity for All.
- B. Kimberly Perez, UC Santa Barbara student, asked that the Regents approve the hiring of all students, regardless of immigration status. She quoted the UC mission to provide education, research, and public service and noted that as an undocumented student, she is not eligible for many research opportunities or work experience.
- C. Ivette Contreras, UC Santa Barbara student, requested that the Board support the hiring of undocumented students regardless of immigration status. She cited that undocumented students have access to fewer financial resources and struggle to afford school and basic needs.
- D. Hiroshi Motomura, Professor at the UCLA School of Law, urged the Board to implement equitable student employment opportunities. He stated that failing to do so creates unequal educational opportunities for undocumented students. He added that leading legal scholars endorse the hiring of undocumented students.

- E. Juan Pedroza, Assistant Professor of Sociology at UC Santa Cruz, expressed his support for hiring undocumented students. He stated that this effort is necessary to retain undocumented students and to remain a world-class leader in education.
- F. Karely Amaya, a UCLA graduate student, stated that she is participating in the hunger strike in support of the hiring of undocumented students. She expressed concern that UC leadership may not implement equitable student employment opportunities due to fear of potential consequences. She added that faculty are ready and willing to hire undocumented students.
- G. Ju Hong, UC Berkeley alumnus, expressed his support for the implementation for Opportunity for All. He stated that access to work opportunities is life-changing for students, and that all students have a right to live and work in a safe environment.
- H. Walid Afifi, Professor at UC Santa Barbara, expressed his support for hiring undocumented students. He stated that he has seen UC commit to change in the past and that UC should not fall back on committees to delay this important work. He added that undocumented students suffer when denied educational work opportunities.
- I. Karen Magana, UCLA student, stated that as an undocumented student, she is prevented from receiving educational work experience. She urged the Regents to approve providing equitable student employment opportunities.
- J. Abel Alvarez, UC Merced alumnus, urged the Regents to vote for Opportunity for All. He expressed that undocumented students do not receive the same opportunities, like being a room assistant, as documented students do. He was also unable to become a teaching assistant, and would like to see undocumented students gain access to these important positions.
- K. Elizabeth Z. requested that UC San Francisco reinstate universal masking in their health care setting during the recent surge of COVID-19. She cited other hospitals that currently require masking and expressed concern that failing to do so creates an unsafe environment.
- L. Leticia Saucedo, Professor at UC Davis School of Law, stated that the Regents have the authority to implement a hiring policy for undocumented students. She said that an increasing number of undocumented students attend UC and are currently excluded from roles such as teaching assistants. She expressed support for creating more equitable opportunities for all students.
- M. Jose Ramirez, UC Merced alumnus, stated his support for Opportunity for All. He said that universities were not created for people from low-income backgrounds and that UC creates burdens with high tuition rates. He encouraged the Regents to foster an inclusive environment for all students by offering employment

opportunities that provide economic empowerment and mobility for undocumented students.

- N. Jaden Penhaskashi, a UCLA student, thanked the Regents for fighting antisemitism, but expressed that it is still a major issue at that campus. He asked that the Board implement an actionable statement at the end of Regents Policy 4403, Statement of Principles against Intolerance, so that students will be held accountable for antisemitic behavior. He said that campus leadership needs guidance on how to respond to antisemitism. He added that the Regents must enforce time, place and manner restrictions to prevent class disruptions and should add antisemitism to diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

2. **STRATEGIC CAMPUS ATHLETICS OVERVIEW: UC SANTA BARBARA AND UC SAN DIEGO**

Chancellor Yang stated that UC Santa Barbara (UCSB) takes great pride in its Athletics department, which plays a pivotal role in energizing campus life of students, faculty, and staff, connecting with the community, and fostering relationships with alumni, donors, and friends. UCSB sponsors 20 National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I sports programs with approximately 460 student athletes. The majority of its teams compete in the Big West Conference of which UCSB is a founding member. The campus also competes in Mountain Pacific Sports Federation men's and women's swimming. He expressed that UCSB is committed to serving, supporting, and enhancing the holistic development of student athletes by nurturing their academic success, as well as their stewardship as citizens to inspire positive change in the world. He finished by introducing Director of Athletics Kelly Barsky as the first woman to serve in the role at the campus.

Ms. Barsky outlined that UCSB is a member of the Big West Conference and offers 20 Division I athletic programs, including ten women's programs and ten men's. She shared that 98 percent of the approximately 460 student athletes are undergraduates, with 74 percent receiving some form of athletic scholarship. These student athletes excel academically with outcomes that are comparable to students who are not athletes, with an average department GPA of 3.31, compared to the campus average GPA of 3.35. Their graduation success rate is currently at 88 percent.

She reviewed UCSB's Gaucho Care Model, a holistic, integrated, and collaborative approach to providing resources and services in navigating the rigors of being a student athlete. The model includes coordinated resources through Athletic department collaborations with campus partners and off-campus partners. Examples include advising, priority registration, study hall, leadership career development training, financial literacy, transition and onboarding to the campus, and health, wellness, and performance services.

Ms. Barsky shared UCSB's athletic successes, including three national championships, including the men's soccer national championship in 2006. The campus earned ten Big West Commissioner cups since the award's inception 23 years ago and achieved numerous conference titles, and national and conference recognition. She stated that UCSB was

recently Big West champion or runner up in women's volleyball, men's water polo, men's basketball, women's basketball, men's tennis, and earned additional national qualifications in women's tennis, cross country track and field, and swimming.

Ms. Barsky provided an overview of UCSB Athletics' community engagement activities, including working with Guide Dogs for the Blind, where athletes work alongside trainers and volunteers to help train the dogs during basketball practices.

She continued by reviewing the UCSB Athletics budget, explaining that the primary expenditures are student athlete scholarships, staffing, travel, medical related expenses, student athlete insurance, supplemental nutrition, recruiting, and the Big West requirement to provide live streamed events. She then discussed current opportunities and challenges, stating that opportunities include enhancing student athlete resources, finding additional ways to serve and connect with the community, completing a new strategic plan, and finding ways to generate additional revenue. Challenges include rising costs, the need to upgrade facilities, filling vacant staff roles, and the external challenges that face collegiate athletics nationally.

Regent Sherman inquired about the state of name, image, and likeness (NIL) deals and collectives on the UCSB campus. Ms. Barsky replied that some UCSB student athletes do have NIL deals and the Athletics department is focused on providing education to those students as well as providing the appropriate disclosures. She also explained that there is one NIL collective on campus that supports men's basketball athletes.

Regent Ellis expressed appreciation for UCSB's partnership with Guide Dogs for the Blind and highlighted the importance of such community partnerships.

Regent Robinson asked how not having a football team affects the UCSB Athletics budget and how the campus plans to maintain financial stability. Ms. Barsky responded that the Athletics department is supported through a variety of campus allocations and is looking into other revenue sources including facilities rentals, fundraising, and naming opportunities. She explained that the department is incorporating budget planning into the strategic plan in order to align resources with strategic priorities. She also highlighted the many external factors that are affecting collegiate athletics budgets nationally.

Regent Robinson followed up by requesting additional clarity on UCSB's funding model, which relies heavily on campus contributions, compared to other campuses. Chancellor Yang responded that the campus also supplements its budget through fundraising activities. Ms. Barsky highlighted several major projects that were paid for by philanthropic gifts, including the Thunderdome Events Center.

Regent Park inquired why the demographics of the student athletes do not reflect the demographics of the overall campus population. Ms. Barsky responded that the Athletics department is actively examining these numbers and is seeking a better understanding of the causes of the misalignment.

Special Committee Chair Hernandez requested that the campus return in approximately one year with more information on this question on demographics.

Chancellor Khosla provided an overview of the UC San Diego Athletics program. Seven years ago, UCSD students voted to move Athletics to Division I, and the campus was in the fourth and final year of that transition. Currently 17 of 23 sports compete in the Big West conference and all sports will be eligible for postseason competition by the coming year. He added that UCSD athletes graduate at the highest rate of any public institution. The transition to Division I also provides additional media opportunities and outreach, in line with its goal of becoming a destination campus. He concluded by introducing UCSD Athletics Director Earl Edwards.

Mr. Edwards shared his philosophy of athletics, which emphasizes the personal development of student athletes, as well as the building of community on campus. He spoke about the importance of prioritizing academics and helping students reach graduation, while helping them to develop as inclusive leaders. He explained that inclusivity is a major goal for the department, which strives to create a sense of belonging for its student athletes.

Mr. Edwards stated that the program includes about 600 student athletes and that, while it was only the third year playing at the Division I level, the programs were already very competitive and would be eligible to compete in NCAA championships by fall 2024. He reviewed the student athlete demographics, sharing that 57 percent receive scholarships and five percent are international students from 19 different countries. As a result of efforts to increase the number of Black student athletes, the program currently includes almost seven percent. He provided additional detail on student athlete graduation rates, which stood at 97 percent as of the previous spring semester. The average GPA of student athletes is 3.389, which is slightly higher than the general student population. Mr. Edwards emphasized that UCSD student athletes are impressive for more than simply their athletic prowess or GPA. He stated that they are dedicated individuals and are able to manage both their schoolwork alongside team commitments.

Mr. Edwards highlighted a number of achievements, including winning the Big West baseball championship for the regular 2023 season, as well as opportunities, including receiving the Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance Grant, allowing UCSD to study human performance, so that the campus would likely become a resource for expertise in that area. He also noted the goal of making UCSD a destination for the local community by bringing high-profile events to campus.

He reviewed the UCSD Athletics budget, which is 90 to 92 percent funded by student fees, creating a sustainable budget where expenses align closely with revenues. He briefly discussed the many challenges coming to collegiate athletics nationally, which will have drastic impacts on expenses, such as NIL and other changes that may result from ongoing lawsuits with NCAA.

Mr. Edwards finished by highlighting UCSD's athletic departmental accomplishments, including the transition to Division I, increased student athlete support, and diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, particularly for staff.

Special Committee Chair Hernandez commended both programs for their emphasis on not only athletic accomplishment, but also on academics and developing student athletes into responsible, contributing members of the community.

Regent Sherman inquired how campuses determine graduation rates and if the calculations are consistent. Ms. Barsky responded that the calculation is based on a six-year graduation timeline that is reportable and standardized by the NCAA.

Regent Sherman asked why there is inconsistent funding between campuses. Ms. Barsky responded that UCSB has been a participant in the Big West conference for decades and that the campus was currently looking at long-term models that will support the Athletic program's financial stability. She clarified that students do not pay for admission to sporting events, but that community members do. She also stated that UCSB does have a student fee, but it is minor, providing about \$2.5 million annually. Mr. Edwards provided background on UCSD's student fees, stating that the decision to fund in that matter arose from the students themselves.

Chancellor Khosla added that the fees are mandatory and that when he was originally approached regarding funding the UCSD Athletics program, he stated it had to be self-supporting, which it currently is at about 98 percent.

Regent Robinson commended Mr. Edwards for his tenure at UCSD, which began in 2000. He then requested the total amount UCSD students contribute to Athletics. Chancellor Khosla referenced the slides, which state that they total \$324.36 per quarter.

Regent Tesfai inquired about the challenges to the funding model that the presenters referenced earlier. Mr. Edwards responded that the upcoming challenges would result from the ongoing lawsuits with the NCAA, which could require conferences and potentially campuses to pay previous and current student athletes, increased post-graduation insurance requirements, and other impacts that come with added costs. Chancellor Khosla added that the lawsuits are primarily focused on football, which neither presenting campus has, but that both campuses might still be subjected to the cost implications associated with the lawsuits.

## 2. **STUDENT ATHLETE PERSPECTIVES: UC DAVIS AND UC IRVINE**

UC Irvine (UCI) Athletic Director Paula Smith introduced the two student athletes, Ofure Iselen who played volleyball, and Thomas McCaffrey who played baseball. Both students had a 3.0 GPA or above, were Dean's List honorees, and were engaged members of the Athletics community.

Ms. Iselen discussed her experience as a student athlete at UCI, which began as a walk-on. She received a full scholarship for her final two years and said that she felt supported by academic advisors and the student wellness program. She cited the differences between the Athletics programs at UCI and UCLA, including that there is not sufficient funding to cover all expenses for the summer program, which means that there is less time for teammates to get to know one another and build the team dynamic. Additionally, there is not enough funding for out-of-state scholarships, so that the majority of the team is from in state, whereas many top teams have athletes from around the country. She also explained that the budget for equipment is limited, so that athletes have to play in the same shoes all season, which are often falling apart by season's end. She concluded by saying that in spite of these challenges, she greatly appreciates her experience at UCI and invited the Regents to come to a match.

Mr. McCaffrey said he chose UCI because of its location next to Newport Beach, its great academics, and its history of athletic success and shared that he has had an amazing experience on the baseball team. He said he went from being an overlooked player in high school to being a walk-on at UCI. He was part of the 2021 season team that was ranked 17th in the nation by the end of the season. He outlined the improvements he has seen to the facilities in his four years as well as to the baseball equipment. He stated that the program is among the best in the country but noted that the team's resources could not compare to other, similar teams around the country. He recommended finding new strategies to bring more fans to the games and to provide student athletes with more access to food, so that students do not have to rely on fast food.

UC Davis (UCD) Athletic Director Rocko DeLuca introduced the two student athletes, Kavir Bains, who played football, and Alexys Ford, who was on the track and field team. He expressed admiration for their accomplishments and said that they are representative of the many incredible student athletes at UCD.

Mr. Bains said that UCD gave him the opportunity to leave the difficult environment where he grew up and that playing football has had both benefits and challenges. He cited the difficulty of managing schedules and having to get up early for practice before school while also working two jobs, but noted that doing so taught him time management, the value of hard work, and the skills to be able to communicate effectively. He also said that he built strong relationships through athletics and appreciates the student athlete experience at UCD.

Ms. Ford said that as a student athlete and psychology major with a human physiology minor, she hopes to be a physical therapist in the future. She said that while she was recruited by both UCI and UCD, she chose UC Davis because she appreciated the campus's focus on academics and the emphasis on personal development. She started out on a partial scholarship and after working hard to improve her skills, received a full scholarship. She said that the academics at UCD are rigorous and that student athletes have access to many resources to ensure their success. She cited the Aggie Ecosystem, which is a program that helps student athletes throughout their careers. She also noted that her experience in a

sorority and as a board member for CADSA, the Coalition for African Diaspora Student Athletes, provided her a well-rounded experience.

Special Committee Chair Hernandez thanked the student presenters and appreciated their willingness to share their experiences.

Regent Park appreciated both the benefits and challenges of being a student athlete, which she noted can be very demanding. She supported the idea of seeking to increase fan turnout for games, sharing that sporting events are a great way to engage with the campus community.

Regent Tesfai asked the presenters if they had any other recommendations for improvements to the athletic programs at their campuses. Ms. Ford cited the need for improved track and related facilities, including bleachers. Because the current track is shared with the community, she noted that it is not up to competition standards. She also recommended increasing the number of athletic trainers as there is currently only one for every 100 student athletes. Mr. Bains said that while the football facilities were very nice, he recommended providing greater food and nutritional resources for athletes.

Ms. Ford added that UCD has the Edwards Family Athletics Center that is open to all athletes and provides many valuable resources to student athletes, including a cold plunge and hot tub, food resources, and trainers.

Regent Tesfai appreciated the student recommendations and suggested that the Special Committee invite the campuses to return in the future to provide an update on efforts to implement these changes.

Special Committee Chair Hernandez supported Regent Tesfai's suggestion. He then asked the students how travel affects their experience, including their ability to complete their coursework and receive tutoring. Ms. Iselen responded that at UCI, academic advisors were very helpful and that professors were flexible with athletes who had to miss class for competitions. She also noted that tutors were often available and when they were not, the campus hired an additional tutor to ensure that the students had the resources necessary to succeed academically. Ms. Smith added that when teams are on the road for extended time periods, the program will send academic coordinators to provide study assistance throughout travel. Ms. Ford stated that the situation was similar at UCD, where academic advisors help students communicate with their professor about travel. She also noted that student athletes are allotted one free tutor for any subject they need assistance in.

Special Committee Chair Hernandez expressed appreciation for the student athletes once again and invited them to reach out with any future feedback or input.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Attest:  
Secretary and Chief of Staff