

The Regents of the University of California

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS

September 19, 2024

The Special Committee on Athletics met on the above date at UCLA Luskin Conference Center, Los Angeles campus and by teleconference meeting conducted in accordance with California Government Code §§ 11133.

Members present: Regents Batchlor, Park, Sarris; Ex officio members Drake and Reilly; Advisory members Salazar and Steintrager; Chancellors Muñoz, Wilcox, and Yang; Staff Advisor Mackness

In attendance: Regents Ellis and Makarechian, Faculty Representative Cheung, Secretary and Chief of Staff Lyall, Managing Counsel Shanle, Chancellor May, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 2:55 p.m. with Special Committee Vice Chair Robinson presiding.

1. **STUDENT-ATHLETE PERSPECTIVES: UC MERCED**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

David Dunham, Executive Director of Recreation and Athletics at UC Merced, announced that, in July, the Merced campus became a provisional member of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division II. Transitioning to full Division II membership would take two years. In that time, UC Merced aimed to continue adding staff and resources to support and empower student-athletes to excel academically, competitively, and as leaders in their community.

Myles Haynes, a member of the UC Merced men's basketball team, began his remarks by thanking Chancellor Muñoz, Mr. Dunham, and Regent Beharry and the Board for their support. Mr. Haynes was a senior originally from Sacramento, California. When he graduated from high school during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were few opportunities to play college basketball, so it meant the world to him to be invited to join UC Merced as a student-athlete. Being a student-athlete has been an amazing experience that has led Mr. Haynes to numerous opportunities, such as starting his own organization, the Human Help Project, which served the low-income community in Merced. What began as a project in Mr. Haynes' freshman year entrepreneurship class has since collected nearly \$15,000 in food, toiletries, clothes, and blankets for the community. He stated that it has been an honor to use his platform as a student-athlete to make connections both on and off campus. In addition, through his internship at the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of the United States, Mr. Haynes was able to make a presentation at the EXIM Bank's 2024 Annual Conference. He has also networked with fellow student-athletes at this year's Black Student Athlete Summit, discussing both their athletic and academic efforts.

Jacqueline Azevedo, a member of the UC Merced women's water polo team, began her remarks by expressing gratitude to the Board for this opportunity. Ms. Azevedo was a senior studying business, economics, and sociology. She grew up in a single-parent immigrant household, and Portuguese was her first language. She has often thought about this piece of advice from her mother: "Your education is an investment that no one can take from you." Ms. Azevedo initially chose to attend UCM to remain active in the Portuguese community in Hilmar, California but later applied for a resident assistant position to experience campus culture. Water polo, which was a new sport at UC Merced in 2022, led Ms. Azevedo through a journey of resilience and personal growth. In addition to learning a new sport, she has competed against Division I and II teams, traveled out of state, and received the team's first Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar Award. Ms. Azevedo has also participated in various campus organizations such as student government and has volunteered for causes such as Bobcats Give Back and the Human Help Project. During her internship at the Fund for American Studies in Washington, D.C., Ms. Azevedo realized that she wished to have a career in student affairs at UC Merced. She underscored her aspiration to become a thoughtful leader. Ms. Azevedo expressed gratitude for being a UCM student, noting the support from staff, the on-campus resources, and Chancellor Muñoz's efforts. She asked the Board to keep supporting initiatives to build and staff facilities that serve students and the Central Valley.

Regent Beharry observed that both presenters' service demonstrated UC Merced's close relationship with the broader community. He asked why a student should pursue an athletic career at UCM. Mr. Haynes replied that UC Merced offered a sense of family and community that a larger institution might lack. The previous week, for example, he ate lunch with Chancellor Muñoz as both happened to be in the same place. UCM student-athletes could compete at a high level and against larger teams while receiving a valuable education; one class or conversation could lead to a major opportunity like Mr. Haynes' EXIM Bank internship. Ms. Azevedo stated that, as a first-generation college student who never had played water polo prior to joining the UCM team, she was an example of students blooming on this young campus. She encouraged students to explore available programs and to determine whether they match one's values and mission as an athlete.

Regent Reilly commended the presenters and asked how they balanced their many achievements. Ms. Azevedo replied that her gratitude fueled her desire to accomplish many things, and she prioritized her many pursuits because they brought her joy. She took advantage of resources and sought help when she needed it. Mr. Haynes added that he too prioritized doing what he loved—playing basketball, serving the community, and learning, and he asked for help when he needed it. Mr. Haynes' athletic trainer introduced him to the campus' Student Athlete Academic Program, and there were mental health workshops for student-athletes as well. Staff at UC Merced were eager to help.

Chancellor Muñoz praised the presenters and recognized Mr. Dunham, crediting his leadership for the campus' invitation to Division II.

President Drake remarked that athletics is merit-based and that athletic competition requires focus and effort in order to see results. He noted the relationship between athletics and academics.

Ms. Azevedo and Mr. Haynes invited the Regents to attend games at UC Merced.

Regent Lee observed that student-athletes were great spokespeople for the Merced campus and could help drive enrollment.

2. **CAMPUS ATHLETICS OVERVIEW: UC BERKELEY AND UC RIVERSIDE**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

This item was deferred.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff