MEMORANDUM

TO:        Paul W. Ferguson
            President

            Julie Hopwood
            Senior Advisor to the President

FROM:      Ron Lisnet
            Co-Chair, Athletics Engagement Initiative Working Group

            Jubin Kwon
            Co-Chair, Athletics Engagement Initiative Working Group

RE:        Athletics Engagement Status Report

Date:      Jan 31, 2014

This report encapsulates the work done thus far in 2013-14 by the Athletics Engagement Initiative Working Group. A final report will be forthcoming in June 2014, which will include our recommendations for investment in the subsequent academic year.

Major Initiatives

1) Purchase and Implementation of “Black Bear Nation” mobile app
As of January 2014, approximately $4,500 has been invested to date for both an iOS and Android version of the branded Black Bear Nation (BBN) mobile app. This app serves as a major interface for fan engagement and communication. The committee believes the app’s role in that effort will be even more central to our engagement with fans moving forward.

This is the first year of BBN, and establishes a baseline from which we can more effectively measure ROI going forward. Features of the app are continually being refined as user input and observed experiences are analyzed.

From September 2013 through January 2014, over 3,588 fans have downloaded BBN.

Thumbnail sketch of our key users:
- 1,612 are registered as students
- 323 students are involved in Greek Life
- 777 students are on-campus residents
- 49 are faculty and staff
- 119 are alumni
Overall:
- 804 users hold at least 500 points, which means they have attended at least five games
- 391 users hold at least 1000 points, and qualify for a black bear sunglasses giveaway

Top 4 Events Checked In:
- Men’s Hockey vs. BC – 492
- Football Playoff Game – 483
- Men’s Hockey vs. BU – 477
- Homecoming Football Game – 410

**Recommendations for BBN expansion** The rollout of the BBN app has been successful enough that other higher education institutions are using us as a case study for their own app introduction plans. These promising beginnings warrant further investment of resources in 2014-15 – promoting, extending and sustaining engagement with the BBN app as the primary resource for interacting with Black Bear athletics. Focus group and/or surveys of BBN app users are being planned for the spring to maximize the effectiveness of the app. One popular request for the app was to include game results (this is an extra feature).

**BBN Engagement Opportunities for Spring 2014**
- Push the idea of “BBN Leaderboard” to the students
  - Tracking rankings are important, as are the prizes
- Loyalty incentives that reward continued usage
- Each user still receives push notifications for updates and game schedules
  - Route game promotion through the app
- Give points for taking surveys about the games
- @Blackbearnation Twitter handle

2) **Enhancing the game day experience to support attendance goals**
Throughout the year to date, the committee has studied existing promotions and game day activities. The desired outcome from this work is the creation of an improved set of game day activities as well as the point rewards system that is run through BBN.

**2013-14 Game Day Promotions**
- Streamlined announcements for more band time
- Given 200+ t-shirts away at all basketball games
- “Dress Like a Black Bear” contest, aimed at kids 12 and under
- Trivia contests
- Team intros have enhanced production values, including videos
- “Electric Slide” women’s basketball team dance after team wins

A UMaine student fan t-shirt to be used as an incentive to become part of the group of fans attending games on a regular basis. The t-shirt is also being used as an incentive for students to use the bus service to the Cross Center (see American Marketing Association (AMA) section below).

The goals for student attendance (per game) in 2013-2014 were set in July 2013 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012 students</th>
<th>2013 students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football:</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Hockey:</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball:</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Football attendance (per game) 2012-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>1,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4,502</td>
<td>6,018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we have seen in most seasons, attendance was high early in the fall. Anecdotal evidence points to the efforts to market football to first-year students, the rollout of the BBN app and the first game student picnic as factors. Additionally, a combination of factors led to the overall numbers including favorable weather, a great season by the team and the home playoff game.

**Men’s Hockey**

Attendance figures for men’s hockey and basketball are yet to be finalized. As hockey enters the final portion of the home schedule, numbers for overall and student attendance appear to be down somewhat compared to 2012-13. That dip can be attributed in part to a less than favorable schedule with lesser-known opponents on weekdays. For example, two Tuesday night games were played in January against exhibition teams. Simultaneous scheduling among multiple sports has also been a factor. The game against UMass-Lowell had to be moved to a Sunday afternoon after the playoff football game, hurting attendance figures.

**Hockey attendance (per game) 2012-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4,211</td>
<td>3,874</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These attendance figures are current as of January 24, 2014. Several key series are still on the home schedule. Matchups against UNH and Merrimack figure to be close to sellouts–this should boost the average attendance figures for 2013-2014. Hockey has had two home sellouts for the first time since the 2010-11 season. In fact, students and fans in general had to be turned away from these sellout games–pointing to the fact that when the team has success and a marquee opponent is on the schedule, UMaine hockey is still a sought-after ticket.

**Basketball attendance (per game) 2012-2013 2013-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>146-M</td>
<td>75-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61-W</td>
<td>37-W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1,287-M</td>
<td>1,320-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,209-W</td>
<td>1,524-W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For comparison purposes, the numbers for basketball attendance put UMaine in sixth place among America East members while women’s attendance ranks second.

The effect of playing basketball at the Cross Center is an unknown variable. Overall attendance is up. Student attendance is down. Two factors to consider:

With very few exceptions, student attendance at women’s basketball games is not traditionally very high but with the team’s success this season, community attendance figures are rising.

We are more confident in the potential of men’s basketball to draw large numbers of students. This has been demonstrated in programs across the country, where tradition is strong and the teams are successful. Tradition and overall win-loss record are not present in our men’s program. This should be a major point of emphasis for the athletics engagement committee and the athletics staff going forward as it represents a substantial untapped potential.
3. Continue to develop a relationship with the student chapter of the American Marketing Association to provide marketing and promotion help on an ongoing basis-mostly targeted at student population.

This relationship was designed to benefit multiple parties with marketing students getting valuable real-world experience, athletics getting boots on the ground to market their programs and further drive student and community engagement.

The AMA group played a significant role in marketing the home playoff football game and their efforts made a difference in overall attendance. They also took on the task of marketing the bus service to Bangor for UMaine Basketball (see next section.)

As we continue to develop this relationship, the AMA has the potential to be a major factor in athletics engagement efforts with UMaine students going forward. Potential also exists for a mutually beneficial relationship on the academic side with the Maine Business School. The potential exists for coursework, internships, possibly even a concentration or a minor in sports marketing, giving MBS students valuable experience in advertising, public relations, promotion and other aspects of marketing.

This type of relationship between athletics and academics has been successful at peer institutions, specifically the University of New Hampshire which offers athletics marketing through their business school. They leverage those students for their athletics program using their CatPack crew (unhwildcats.com/catpack).

Based on initial feedback from students in the AMA group, they would like to extend their relationship with the athletics engagement committee through spring 2014 and beyond.
4. Develop a busing plan to get student fans to Bangor

The opening of the Cross Insurance Center in late 2013 created a new opportunity to connect the UMaine community with downtown Bangor via the men’s and women’s basketball teams.

As of January 2014, bus transportation to basketball games is available for UMaine students for select dates when classes are in session. The goal should be to provide free, easy transportation to Bangor. This should help create a sense of belonging in the group that makes them all want to attend games together. There have been a few scheduling conflicts with other athletic events on campus. In those instances, bus service was not provided.

AMA students were charged with promoting the availability of bus transportation for UMaine students to basketball games at the Cross Center. Average use of this service has been between 30-40 students.

One positive factor that may be attributed to the bus service, student attendance overall when bus service is offered on campus is up, so while the students may not take advantage of the bus itself, the service may act as a promotion for basketball, prompting students to drive to Bangor on their own.

5. Campus signage and banners/tabletop displays across campus and in local areas

This goal addresses one of the key issues (lack of advance game information) borne out by focus groups and surveys. An example of success in signage this year was the advance promotion for the UMaine vs. UNH football playoff game on December 7. Displays were placed in multiple locations at the Memorial Union and all campus dining facilities, as well as key traffic intersections in Orono and in Old Town.

For upcoming highlight games in basketball and hockey for spring 2014, signage will be more limited due to the complicated schedules of the various winter and spring sports. One alternative will be to use signage to promote use of the BBN app, which has schedules as part of the interface.

6. Scheduling coaches and players to speak to large student groups/Beginning of semester visit to every floor in every dorm

This initiative has experienced varying degrees of success in 2013-2014. Larger gatherings of students, such as the traditions ceremony or the Greek life assembly at the beginning of the year have allowed for a positive dialog between athletes, coaches and the student body. Engagement on the part of our student-athletes has been mixed, with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success.
The football team did a major push before the 12/7 UNH playoff game. Cheerleaders, dance and band team members have done some canvassing of campus. Done right, encouraging this engagement can be a key method for establishing a closer relationship between coaches, players and their student fan base.

7. Student-athlete engagement efforts

In summer 2013, we sought to further cultivate the relationship between teams, players and the campus community. A special leadership seminar for student athletes was held in August 2013, led by EJ Roach. A student-athlete on the swim team, Naja Harvey, was asked to join the engagement committee table and has participated regularly since September 2013.

In December 2013, Ron Lisnet and Jubin Kwon met with the “Student-Athlete Advisory Committee” (SAAC) group, building upon that prior week’s visit by President Ferguson and Julie Hopwood. The goal of the visit was to encourage student-athletes to contribute to outreach and goodwill building opportunities throughout the year, in collaboration with key staff and coaches such as Eileen Flaherty (who oversees NCAA compliance on campus).

In spring 2014, the committee looks forward to expanding the participation of student-athlete leaders in campus-wide engagement efforts, re-connecting with SAAC in March or April and planning this fall’s student-athlete leadership training sessions. One initiative that holds promise is an effort to encourage student-athletes to support other teams as large groups to encourage inter-team collaboration and support.
Athletics engagement recommendations for spring 2014 and beyond

We anticipate that new and ongoing initiatives for athletics will be closely aligned with the strategic plan of incoming AD Creech and Office of the President. Based on the committee’s experience year-to-date, we have prepared recommendations for further athletics engagement.

The engagement committee’s report at the end of FY14 will include a complete chronicle of the Black Bear athletics to date and will include more information on ROI, along with new recommendations for 2014-2015. At this halfway point of the year, here are recommendations we believe warrant further exploration and support.

1) Re-create from the ground up the game day experience:
   - Work with the band, Black Bear Sports Properties, athletics marketing and AMA to create more entertaining in-game programming
   - A Master of Ceremonies (MC) at games to engage our audiences and promote the BBN app

We recommend that the funding picture for 2014-15 be secured as soon as possible in summer 2014. The benefits of such an approach are a more strategic plan of yearlong prizes and other fan-focused incentives. With enough lead time, we can build out more robust engagement throughout the year, rewarding fans attendance and their engagement.

2) We aim to maximize available engagement resources with experiential opportunities that will have little to no impact on our budget. Examples of these experiences are:
   - Lunches with coaches and/or players
   - Exclusive fan access to facilities, coaches, players
   - Premium seating at select events

3) The engagement committee and athletics in general have had the most success when an “all-hands” approach has been taken to marketing signature events. A carefully constructed marketing plan for strategically selected games and events creates “buzz” around a sport—this has a positive halo effect that extends to other games.

In 2013, the football playoff game, opening football game picnic and beach night were three prime examples of this “all-hands” approach—when sufficient people power and resources are brought to bear, the result is that the game is the thing to do on campus.
   - This preferred approach is not feasible for every game or every sport. If a plan with strategically selected games and events is put together it will create buzz around a sport that should have a halo effect that extends to other games.
4) Work towards formalizing and developing an ongoing relationship with the AMA student group. Create an internship or sports marketing group that can earn credit or somehow be compensated for working with athletics to market teams and programs to various fan bases.

5) Further develop the BBN app engagement program to make it a destination on people’s phones that they want to visit often. Further develop an attractive prize structure and points system that fans will want to engage in and return to. Scores and news items should be added to BBN, so fans will use the app as a tool to keep up with Black Bear athletics.

Additional staff resources and/or time devoted to BBN will allow us to maximize its engagement potential. As we mentioned earlier in this report, UMaine is already a national success story in deploying this tool, cited by the vendor as a model for other institutions to follow.

6) Leverage the cohort of 450 UMaine student-athletes more effectively. The power of this group and their status on campus as high profile campus leaders is immense. Their reach to the rest of campus and beyond through social media and other avenues is a megaphone that is currently being underutilized. Through organizations such as SAAC, we can work to encourage teams to support each other as well. Lastly, we can work with coaches, athletics administration and other stakeholders to promote our student-athletes, cheerleaders, band and dance team members in local schools and into the community.

7) We recommend adding more student voices to the committee. We acknowledge their positive contribution and good ideas to date and look forward to welcoming more opinions in the future.

8) Work with Black Bear Sports Properties to develop joint ventures that simultaneously benefit their corporate partners and help defray costs for athletics engagement efforts such as the bus service.
ATHLETICS ENGAGEMENT PRODUCTION CALENDAR 2013-2014
Notable events are chronicled here complemented by planned events for the ’14 spring semester.

Student-athlete leadership seminar 8/29/2013
Black Bear Nation app rollout 8/29/2013
First-year student engagement activity 8/30-9/1/2013
Rollout of signage for home games 9/8/2013 + subsequent games
Football home game student picnic 9/14/2013
First football game concert 9/14/2013
Papa John’s field goal, other in-game contests home football dates
Student tailgate section 10/5/2013
Bought student tickets for home soccer playoff 10/31/2013
Black Bear Nation t-shirt rollout 11/14 + 11/19/2013
Bus service to Cross Center launch 11/14 + 11/19/2013
Hot chocolate for student fans 11/16/2013
Selection show watch party 11/24/2013
Playoff game pep rally 12/5/2013
Playoff game marketing and promotion 11/24-12/6/2013
Hot chocolate for student fans 12/7/2013
Black Bear Nation t-shirt giveaway 1/16/2014
Rollout of lunch with Red BBN app promo 2/3/2014
Play4Kay- cancer fundraiser 2/9/2014
Rollout Jimmy Howard autograph card promo 2/10/2014
Rollout of hockey sunglass giveaway–BBN 2/10/2014
“Halfcourt Hysteria”- men’s basketball 2/12/2014
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Game Show Night” at women’s basketball</td>
<td>2/26/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group and/or Qualtrics survey</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball promotions</td>
<td>TBD-April</td>
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</tbody>
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