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I. Background & Introduction

As part of the University of Massachusetts Boston’s institutional strategic planning process, the Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects embarked upon this assignment in 2010. The initiation of this process was prompted by Chancellor Keith Motley’s request to create a set of recommendations for the next five years that will result in exclusive excellence by strengthening the effectiveness, reach, and stature of the University.

The Chancellor’s call for the institution to pursue and achieve the gold standard in broadly defined terms, along with the identification of strategies to pursue top classifications in all of its work, establishes the context for this strategic plan. This ambitious institutional goal presents a unique opportunity to reshape the nature of the institution.

Over the last decade, the University of Massachusetts Boston has renewed itself periodically as it has adapted to the changing nature of higher education, athletics and recreation. Through the allocation of scarce resources to targeted areas of opportunity, the University of Massachusetts Boston Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects has been able to build and support excellence in a number of programs.

Several key reasons make investing in a strong athletics and recreation program an important consideration. First, the overall visibility of the University of Massachusetts Boston will be enhanced through the regional and national media attention focused on successful sports teams as demonstrated by the recent success of the varsity baseball team. This enhanced visibility helps the University maintain its regional and national presence, while encouraging the positive engagement of the alumni in the process. Additionally, the consistent sports coverage keeps the University of Massachusetts Boston name in front of prospective students who often form their initial impressions of the University from that important sports media exposure.

Second, both the quality of student life and the development of individual students are enhanced by providing social and physical outlets for students. Whether playing in varsity competition, attending games, or participating in intramurals, fitness or wellness opportunities are a vital outlet for physical activity and positive social engagement is available for students while pursuing their academic degrees. These outlets provide opportunities for interaction and community-building that result in improving student morale and overall satisfaction.

Third, a successful intercollegiate athletics program assists the University in securing the resources necessary for operation. Through creation of alumni enthusiasm and support for athletic teams, the institution is able to create meaningful relationships that often materialize in gifts of financial support.

This strategic plan focuses on the athletics and recreation programs at UMass Boston, therefore the reference utilized throughout the remainder of this document will be “University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation.”
The plan is constructed around three (3) core programmatic and operational initiatives. These core initiatives will require considerable time, energy and focus on the part of UMass Boston. In order to pursue each of these initiatives, the Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Projects & Programs will need to implement the strategies identified throughout the plan, which emerged from divisional consultation, interviews, and a broad-based survey instrument. Projects and assignments requiring priority concentration in order to achieve strategic plan success are also identified within each initiative.

The three (3) core initiatives that will serve as the foundation of this five-year strategic plan are:

- **Initiative I:** Provide student-athletes with a quality experience that emphasizes academic and competitive excellence
- **Initiative II:** Reemphasize the importance of intramurals and recreational programming to enhance the physical and mental well being of all members of the campus community and improve the quality of student life.
- **Initiative III:** Conduct a major institutional and system campaign to identify the resources to fund the improvement of the intercollegiate athletics and recreation facilities at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Regarding **Initiative I**, despite all of its many accomplishments, the University of Massachusetts Boston is an institution that seems to lack an identity, particularly related to campus community and school spirit. While there are many reasons for this phenomenon there seems to be an institution-wide interest in changing that culture, and an opportunity through the intercollegiate athletics program to do so. Committing to a significant improvement in competitive excellence and achieving that goal would energize the student body, staff and alumni by instilling institutional pride. This will require bringing the facilities and resource base up to the appropriate level of desired competitive success (conference, regional and national). This will also require holding coaches accountable for competitive results commensurate with their resource base. By achieving notable competitive success the other primary goals of building a sense of community and pride and raising the money to support a quality intercollegiate athletics program will be possible.

As a result of society’s increasing attention to sport, the intercollegiate athletics program provides a vehicle for the University of Massachusetts Boston to reach outside its immediate community on a regular basis. Successful teams provide a motivating factor for alumni, donor, and business relations for the entire institution. Team and individual athletic performances provide a window to the University’s commitment to excellence. Highly competitive teams build excitement, yet also demonstrate that the University is providing talented student-athletes an opportunity to continue to excel in the classroom and on the playing field.

**Initiative II** addresses one of the connecting bonds available to help Athletics & Recreation begin changing the culture at the University of Massachusetts Boston, which is the opportunity to meet the growing demand for expanded and improved campus intramural and recreational programming. By delivering these services in a creative and customer-valued manner, the hope
will be to transfer that sense of campus appreciation to enhancing student life, improving student recruitment and retention rates, providing additional learning opportunities, and increased support of the intercollegiate athletics teams and the Division overall.

**Initiative III** seeks to develop an institutional and system strategy to identify and acquire the resources to improve the athletics and recreation facilities at the University. This goal is paramount to the future of the program. The overall primary response to the Divisional survey was the need for improved athletics and recreation facilities on the campus. The University is embarking upon significant improvements regarding the “look” of the campus and this will greatly improve the overall appearance and feeling one has while on campus. It is important to note that institutional progress is the result of exceptional planning and execution. The hope is that this goal of creating and executing an athletic and recreational facilities development plan will work in tandem with the overall institutional planning effort.

This ambitious strategic planning process has created the opportunity for the University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation to take a critical look at its programmatic and facility needs in order to be able to participate in and support the Chancellor’s goals of building upon the institutional strengths of research, teaching and civic engagement. Athletics & Recreation is positioned to support the goals of enhancing positive attention and public visibility, attracting excellent students and securing external resource support.
II. Mission Statement & Purpose

The mission of UMass Athletics & Recreation is to encourage all UMass students to discover and nurture the “total person” who enriches the world and brings honor to the University, now and throughout life. We encourage every student-athlete to be a champion in an environment where academic integrity, social responsibility, respect, and competitive excellence are highly valued.

Consistent with the mission of the University, the Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects is committed to nurturing human potential. The Division is committed to the goals of diversity and fairness in its programs and in its dealings with student-athletes. Honesty and integrity serve as the foundation for all athletic endeavors.

The University of Massachusetts Boston aims to provide an athletics and recreation program that will equitably meet the individual needs, interests, and abilities of the students who participate. UMass Athletics & Recreation believes that significant educational value is derived from athletics and recreational participation. Benefits such as learning to pursue excellence, the value of teamwork and collaboration, the value of cross-cultural understanding and acceptance, personal character and leadership development, the importance of exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and adherence to the highest standards of integrity, ethics and sportsmanship are all important educational lessons derived from athletic participation. The intercollegiate athletics and recreation programs are critical elements in the educational and personal development of both the general student population, as well as the student-athletes.

The athletics and recreation program provides the opportunity for its participants to develop personal excellence. Participation on an intercollegiate team will provide students with the opportunity to learn and develop values which foster self-discipline, teamwork, leadership skills and fair play in an equitable and diverse environment. The overall development and welfare of each student is of paramount importance.
III. Competitive Goal, Aspiration & Vision

As a guide to the development of this strategic plan, and under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor for Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects, the University of Massachusetts Boston Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects endorses the following statements:

- **Competitive Goal**: Intercollegiate sports will be consistently ranked in the Directors Cup Top 25. Intramurals & Recreations will be recognized by professional organizations as a national leader in the provision of intramural and recreational opportunities.

- **Aspiration**: To achieve in a manner consistent with Division III principles a quality undergraduate experience for student-athletes and recreational participants in outstanding facilities and under the guidance of nationally distinguished coaches and administrators.

- **Vision**: To be innovative in creating a balanced model of academic, athletic and recreational excellence that is consistent with the standard of our 21st century, urban, student-centered research institution.
IV. Initiatives & Strategies

Initiative I: Make an unprecedented institutional commitment to competitive excellence on the conference, regional and national levels within NCAA Division III. Provide an equitable and quality experience for student-athletes that are consistent with NCAA Division III principles.

Introduction

The University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation will be seen as a consistently winning program. Competitive excellence will be achieved primarily by competing for conference championships, although some sports will be able to compete for national championships.

The University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation will be viewed as a competitive, innovative and supportive employer of first choice for coaches and staff where nationally recognized professional goals can be achieved.

Student-athletes will be enriched by their undergraduate experience that was characterized by a concern for student-athlete welfare, and a commitment to and celebration of their individual and team success both academically and athletically.

The University of Massachusetts Boston will establish competitive excellence as an important institutional goal. There should be no apologies offered for this competitive ambition nor should excuses for competitive failure be acceptable. A conference championship is the proper measure for most teams as they strive for competitive excellence. The competitive success of its teams is critically important to the image of the UMass Boston Athletics & Recreation and to its own sense of accomplishment and institutional pride. Athletic mediocrity is not acceptable. Yet the nature of athletic competition is that teams cannot win all of the time. Finding a way to properly strike the balance between aggressively pursuing competitive excellence while acknowledging competitive realities will be a challenge going forward.

Successful implementation of this strategic plan depends largely on the ability to align programs, performance and resources with the Division’s competitive goals, aspiration and vision. The University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation needs to be explicit about its goals and hold coaching and administrative performance accountable for reaching them. Progress toward that end should serve as a basis for allocating resources to individuals, teams and programs that successfully advance the UMass Boston intercollegiate athletics program.
There are many examples where the need for additional resources is evident in order to improve competitively. Assistant coaching positions and salaries need to be enhanced. Full-time jobs on campus for assistants would help stabilize the assistant coaching ranks. Adding graduate assistantships to the coaching staffs would also provide student-athletes with better coaching and support. Recruiting budgets are almost non-existent and need to be increased.

UMass Athletics & Recreation believes that significant educational value is derived from athletic participation. Benefits such as learning to pursue excellence, the value of teamwork and collaboration, the value of cross-cultural understanding and acceptance, personal character and leadership development, the importance of exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and adherence to the highest standards of integrity, ethics and sportsmanship are all important educational lessons derived from athletic participation.

UMass Athletics & Recreation is committed to the NCAA Division III principles that emphasize that athletes are representative of the student body. Additionally, Division III principles encourage participation by maximizing the number and variety of athletics opportunities available to students, placing primary emphasis on regional in-season and conference competition.

According to student-athletes the University seldom recognizes student-athlete success despite the tremendous commitment of time student-athletes make to both their sports and studies. Efforts to celebrate student-athlete success across campus and among all constituencies should be emphasized. Finding ways to foster student-athlete pride will be an important initiative in moving forward.

**Strategies for Initiative I**

- Create an environment both financially and structurally where the University of Massachusetts Boston intercollegiate athletics program can compete perennially for team and individual championships.

- Establish and articulate competition-based goals to help each team pursue conference championships.

- Communicate clearly that winning is important and is not in conflict with academic success.

- Ensure that each program’s resources are commensurate with competitive expectations.

- Provide annually resources and opportunities for teams and student-athletes to compete at the highest levels.

- Strive to be in the Top Ten related to winning percentage within NCAA Division III.

- Capture, preserve, showcase and communicate the University of Massachusetts Boston’s past successes in intercollegiate athletics as a way of expressing these competitive expectations.
- Provide orientation programming for all coaches, staff and student-athletes on NCAA Division III principles and UMass Athletics philosophy.

- Celebrate UMass Boston’s successes both academically and athletically in visible ways.

- Improve communication of current athletic and academic successes among all constituencies using all new media opportunities.

- Enhance communication between current team members and athletic alumni with the hope of formalizing a strong student-athlete alumni network.

- Provide competitive compensation packages (variable pay, bonuses, professional development, and sports camps) for coaches as allowed by the University and NCAA that are consistent with industry standards.

- Retain and develop outstanding coaches and administrators by proactively addressing their compensation, workload, development and employment satisfaction levels, and by identifying a specific career development plan to assist with career management.

- Provide the full complement of full-time coaches as allowed by NCAA Division III for each sport.

- Support financially effective personnel practices such as encouraging coaches to participate in national coaching conventions and clinics.

- Produce a plan to regularly publicize former student-athletes and highlight their professional and personal successes to serve as inspirational role models for student-athletes to achieve their best.

- Allow for preregistration of student-athletes to allow them to meet their academic and graduation demands while also meeting their athletic practice and competition requirements.

- Create a substantive freshmen orientation program for all students and conduct an annual customer satisfaction survey for use by student-athletes to ensure continual feedback and input.

- Provide appropriate level of sports medicine staff, equipment and space to ensure student-athlete safety along with medically sound policies, systems and protocols.

- Provide student-athletes with the tools they need to train and compete by meeting industry standards in the amount of equipment and apparel provided to the student-athletes.

- Work with the University to resolve the lack of on-campus housing.
- Create a comprehensive fundraising program to help meet all Division goals and new initiatives.

**Priorities for Initiative I**

- Prepare a competitive report for each sport that analyzes coaching and support staff levels and comparative information on facilities, budgets and results, which will be used to establish and monitor competitive expectations.

- A comprehensive study will be completed which analyzes the sports sponsorship currently offered by the University.

- Conduct an anonymous evaluation of all athletic support units (academic services, athletic training, strength & conditioning, media relations, marketing) and review those results so as to improve performance.

- Develop a nationally recognized strength & conditioning program to work with the student-athletes from a physical performance perspective.

- Develop a systematic communication to current and past student-athletes that celebrates competitive, academic and professional success and works to solidify the unique bond that exists between both groups.

- Continue development of productive integration-based relationships with admissions, financial aid, deans and other critical departments on campus.
Initiative II: Reemphasize the importance of intramurals and recreational programming for the physical and mental well-being of all members of the campus community.

**Introduction**

The University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation will be viewed as a vital component of campus life contributing to the sense of school spirit and providing opportunities for recreational interaction among its various constituencies.

The University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation will provide opportunities for the entire campus community to participate in a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

The strategic planning process has revealed consensus that The University of Massachusetts Boston Athletics & Recreation has the potential to become a more valuable asset to the campus as it captures the positive attention of its various constituencies. Few, if any other, components of the campus bring together so many faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters to celebrate the desired institutional goals of:

- Living in balance physically and mentally
- Promoting a healthy lifestyle
- Participating in regular physical activity
- Connecting to the local ecological environment
- Building collaboration and teamwork
- Contributing to a healthy campus community
- Having recreational, competitive and social fun

UMass Boston Athletics & Recreation is dedicated to making a positive difference in the health and well-being of the campus community. With a myriad of options in fitness, wellness, outdoor recreation and intramural programming, the Division provides experiential opportunities for individuals to participate in regular physical activity, discover the unique environmental assets of the campus’ location, and pursue an enhanced quality of life. Participation, education and achievement are promoted as an important part of an education for life and to promote a lifelong involvement in sport and recreation.

Through collaborative efforts across campus, UMass Boston Athletics & Recreation will develop a fun and supportive environment filled with a wealth of recreational options through which students, faculty, staff and alumni can achieve lifestyle balance along with good physical and mental health. Intramurals and recreational programming will allow the campus community to make a commitment to health and well-being through regular physical activity and continuous personal growth opportunities.

*UMASS Boston Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects*
**Strategies for Initiative II**

- Facilitate a heightened understanding in the University community of the positive value of intramurals and recreation.
- Build a program of intramurals and recreation that meets the needs and interests of the student body, as well as the entire University community.
- Offer innovative programs and services to the entire campus community in the areas of Aquatics, Fitness & Wellness, Informal Recreation, Intramural Sports, Outdoor and Waterfront Recreation and Special Events.
- Implement a comprehensive campus recreation communications plan that allows for ongoing customer feedback and assessment.
- Create opportunities for student involvement in a variety of programs and services that support student health, safety, and general well-being.
- Establish a campus culture that supports the concept of achieving work-study-life balance.
- Perform an internal assessment based on the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association’s [NIRSA] *Standards & Guidelines for Recreational Programs*.

**Priorities for Initiative II**

- Create a biannual online campus-wide survey to identify recreational fitness interests of students, faculty and staff.
- Work closely with the University’s benefits manager to coordinate programs in conjunction with health care providers.
- Create a separate communications plan for disseminating recreational information across campus.
Initiative III: Conduct a major institutional and system campaign to identify the resources to fund the improvement of the intercollegiate athletics and recreation facilities at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Introduction

Student-athletes, coaches and administrators will be attracted to UMass Boston Athletics & Recreation because of the outstanding quality and well planned layout of its athletics and recreation facilities.

When compared to other premier NCAA Division III institutions it is clear that UMass Boston’s facilities need significant improvement. Overall, many of the facilities are old, outdated or generally in a state of disrepair. Long-term deferred maintenance projects are waiting for the identification of funding sources. Expanded athletic practice and playing seasons together with increased campus recreational program demands are placing additional stress on the current facilities. Additionally, the overall fitness trend is not going away and this usage adds to the overburdened facilities.

The Athletics Master Plan Sub-Committee Report (October 2009) issued its comprehensive assessment of the existing facilities for athletic and recreational programs and made specific recommendations. The Master Plan recommendations serve as an outstanding guideline for the improvement of the University’s athletics and recreational facilities. Those recommendations center on the following improvements:

- Build a new track and artificial surface field.
- Embrace the fitness/wellness center by making it an integral part of the master plan.
- Address the infrastructure of the Clark Athletic Center.

The University Master Plan including the Athletics Subcommittee report may be viewed in its entirety on the University’s website at [http://www.umb.edu/masterplan/](http://www.umb.edu/masterplan/). The need for a dramatic improvement in athletic and recreation facilities is immediately evident. The most significant need is for an outdoor practice facility so that the game field can be kept in good condition. Bleachers in the gymnasium need to be replaced. Locker rooms are not up to NCAA Division III standards. New lighting in the hockey and gymnasium area is needed. A proper irrigation system for the softball field needs to be examined. Floor boards in the gymnasium need to be replaced in certain areas. A new multiplex turf field is desirable for soccer, lacrosse and the track teams. A field house with turf for indoor workouts would be very helpful given the New England climate and weather. The Clark Athletic Center should reflect Beacon Pride with proper maintenance, painting, signage and lighting. All of these projects are captured in the Athletics Master Plan Sub-Committee Report ([http://www.umb.edu/masterplan/](http://www.umb.edu/masterplan/)). A new comprehensive wellness center that includes large indoor playing surfaces and a larger fitness space is needed to match national recommendations issued by NIRSA.
Strategies for Initiative III

- Provide sports teams with facilities that maximize training, competitive, and recruiting advantages and are competitive with other rival programs.

- Build the sense of community and convenience into facility planning efforts by emphasizing overall University recreation needs and patterns.

- Establish a regular monthly meeting with University-wide Facilities Department in order to facilitate communication and progress concerning the needs of the University’s Athletics facilities.

- Develop and secure funding for deferred maintenance projects for current facilities.

- Communicate the findings of the Athletics Master Plan Sub-Committee Report to all athletic and recreation constituents.

- Enhance strength & conditioning facilities for student-athletes.

- Provide a physical environment to support teaching, learning and success.

- Create an internal maintenance plan with annual funding for all athletic/recreation facilities.

Priorities for Initiative III

- Working with the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, draft a long-term plan to successfully select fundraising committee members for the UMass Boston Athletics & Recreation capital campaign efforts.

- Working with the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, organize and conduct a comprehensive capital campaign that includes a detailed plan outlining all projects, staffing assignments and timelines for completion.

- Build an outdoor practice field with a turf field for multiple sports and recreation programs.

- Communicate internally and externally the sequencing of planned facility construction.

- Identify short-term facility improvements that can positively improve both athletic and recreational programs.

- Persuade the University to fund enhanced campus recreation programming as a university-wide benefit.
V. Concluding Remarks

This strategic plan recognizes the overall success of the athletics & recreation programs at UMass Boston in seeking to meet University expectations over the years. At the same time, it also recognizes that the program’s accomplishments could not have been attained without the support and financial backing of the University; and, that this financial support continues to be even more vitally important in attempting to chart a new and improved course for the Division of Athletics, Recreation, and Special Programs & Projects in the future.

Looking forward the athletics and recreation programs can serve as an important marketing arm for the University, which will increase visibility and contribute to the increased regional and national reputation of the institution. The critically important issue for realizing the potential benefits from UMass Boston athletics success is gaining the University’s support on the future vision and mission for athletics and recreation. By gaining the institution’s endorsement and appreciation for the role the program can play, there will be greater likelihood of gaining the resources that are required for successful implementation of this strategic plan.

The goal of this planning effort is to position UMass Boston’s athletics and recreation program as a national competitor and an academic model for public urban universities of its size and scope.
## Strategic Plan FY11-FY16 - INTERCOLLEGIATES

### Initiative I: Make an unprecedented institutional commitment to competitive excellence on the conference, regional and national levels within NCAA Division III. Provide an equitable and quality experience for student-athletes that are consistent with NCAA Division III principles.

### STRATEGIES

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<tr>
<td>Facilitate a heightened understanding in the University community of the positive value of intramurals and recreation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build a program of intramurals and recreation that meets the needs and interests of the student body, as well as the entire University community.</td>
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<td>Offer innovative programs and services to the entire campus community in the areas of Aquatics, Fitness &amp; Wellness, Informal Recreation, Intramural Sports, Outdoor and Waterfront Recreation and Special Events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement a comprehensive campus recreation communications plan that allows for ongoing customer feedback and assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create opportunities for student involvement in a variety of programs and services that support student health, safety, and general well-being.</td>
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<td>Establish a campus culture that supports the concept of achieving work-study-life balance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perform an internal assessment based on the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association’s [NIRSA] <em>Standards &amp; Guidelines for Recreational Programs</em>.</td>
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### PRIORITIES

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<tr>
<td>Create a biannual online campus-wide survey to identify recreational fitness interests of students, faculty and staff.</td>
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<td>Work closely with the University’s benefits manager to coordinate programs in conjunction with health care providers.</td>
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<td>Create a separate communications plan for disseminating recreational information across campus.</td>
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<td>Initiative III: Conduct a major institutional and system campaign to identify the resources to fund the improvement of the intercollegiate athletics and recreation facilities at the University of Massachusetts Boston.</td>
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<td><strong>STRATEGIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide sports teams with facilities that maximize training, competitive, and recruiting advantages and are competitive with other rival programs.</td>
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<td>• Build the sense of community and convenience into facility planning efforts by emphasizing overall University recreation needs and patterns.</td>
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<td>• Establish a regular monthly meeting with University-wide Facilities Department in order to facilitate communication and progress concerning the needs of the University’s Athletics facilities.</td>
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<td>• Develop and secure funding for deferred maintenance projects for current facilities.</td>
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<td>• Communicate the findings of the Athletics Master Plan Sub-Committee Report to all athletic and recreation constituents.</td>
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<td>• Enhance strength &amp; conditioning facilities for student-athletes.</td>
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<td>• Provide a physical environment to support teaching, learning and success.</td>
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<td>• Create an internal maintenance plan with annual funding for all athletic/recreation facilities.</td>
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<td><strong>PRIORITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Working with the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, draft a long-term plan to successfully select fundraising committee members for the UMass Boston Athletics &amp; Recreation capital campaign efforts.</td>
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<td>• Working with the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, organize and conduct a comprehensive capital campaign that includes a detailed plan outlining all projects, staffing assignments and timelines for completion.</td>
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**UMASS Boston Division of Athletics, Recreation, Special Programs & Projects**
- Build an outdoor practice field with a turf field for multiple sports and recreation programs.
- Communicate internally and externally the sequencing of planned facility construction.
- Identify short-term facility improvements that can positively improve both athletic and recreational programs.
- Persuade the University to fund enhanced campus recreation programming as a university-wide benefit.