May 17, 2023

To: Kathleen Bawn, Undergraduate Council Chair
James Bisley, Graduate Council Chair
Gabriel Rossman, Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Well-Being Committee Co-Chair
Brooke Scelza, Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Well-Being Committee Co-Chair

From: Jessica Cattelino, UCLA Academic Senate Chair

Re: Academic Considerations for the Athletics Conference Realignment (Big Ten)

At the April 13, 2023, meeting of the Executive Board, members heard from Athletics Director Jarmond and his colleagues about plans for the transition to the Big 10 college athletics conference. Executive Board members focused on the importance of centering the academic mission of the university, including ensuring that a change in athletic conference did not adversely impact the learning experiences of students, including athletes and their classmates. Concerns about student learning and wellbeing in the Big 10 context prompted a broader conversation about the extent to which some student athletes at UCLA are able to learn in the context of huge demands on their time.

Members voted to approve a motion to send this letter requesting that the Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Well-Being Committee (SPSWC), a joint subcommittee of the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils, look into the question of the hours that student athletes spend on athletics activities and whether or how this affects student well-being. This request reflects present-day concerns, not only Big 10-related issues.

If I may suggest, some approaches may include ensuring the SPSWC understands the NCAA regulations on time required for athletics activities (practice hours, etc.) and then determining whether the campus is in compliance, reviewing the academic-related sections of the Student-Athlete Handbook, and engaging with the Bruin Athletic Council (BAC) comprised of student representatives from each of the 25 teams to understand the academic experience of student athletes.

The Executive Board requests a response by the end of the Fall 2023 quarter.

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Emily Le, Principal Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
Julia Nelsen, Principal Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate
Shane White, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate