

Athletic director says academic success will remain priority in coaching search

By Brittany Anas Camera Staff Writer Boulder Daily Camera
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University of Colorado Athletic Director Mike Bohn addressed a group of faculty leaders Thursday, saying academic rigor is a priority as the school rebuilds its football program and men's basketball holds promise for modest revenue growth this season.

Bohn spoke to CU faculty council and senate members on the heels of Cincinnati head coach Butch Jones turning down a contract offer from CU.

"We will not cut corners," Bohn said. "That's my pledge to you."

Boulder faculty leaders passed a measure last week recognizing that the academic performance of football players has improved over the semesters, with CU achieving its highest-ever average team grade-point averages over the past three semesters and placing more students on the Pac-12 all-academic team than any other school. The resolution said the Boulder Faculty Assembly urges the campus to allow principles of academic excellence to guide its search for a new football head coach.

Bohn talked little about the coaching search Thursday but gave the faculty members a highlight reel that included the enthusiasm over men's basketball, the potential to showcase research on the Pac-12 Network and the academic prowess of lacrosse players as CU launches a women's lacrosse team.

A new donor seat tax last year in the Coors Events Center brought in \$400,000 in revenue, Bohn said. This year, the athletic department is aiming for \$650,000.

On Wednesday night, the CU men's basketball team defeated Colorado State 70-61 before a record crowd of 11,708 in the Coors Events Center.

For the first time in CU history, men's basketball generated a profit last year. This season, the team is projected to bring in \$4.75 million in revenue, with expenses totaling \$4.51 million, according to the athletic department budget.

Bohn also talked to faculty members about the opportunity to have their research shared through the Pac-12 Network -- pitching features like one on professor Leslie Leinwand's heart research that uses python snakes.

Faculty members seemed warm to the idea.

"We have a big audience that fills up for Saturday morning physics lecture -- so why not tape it?" suggested CU physics professor Jerry Peterson, chairman of the Boulder Faculty Assembly.

Bohn also said adding women's lacrosse as an official CU sport will have academic advantages. CU announced last month that it has signed 19 players for its first recruiting class.

"Lacrosse athletes are extremely bright," he said. "It's just how they're wired."

Also, during the discussion with faculty members, CU assistant architecture and planning professor Matthew Jelacic suggested the athletic department enlist environmental studies students to help with the schematic design of a possible upgrade that could add a permanent practice facility along with upgrades to Folsom Stadium and Dal Ward Athletic Center.

Bohn welcomed the idea and said he wants to explore it further.

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