

# UTICA

UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

June 13, 2023

Dear Members of the Utica University Community,

I want to update you today on some decisions involving the long-term goals and direction of the University's intercollegiate athletics program.

After careful and lengthy evaluation, the University has reached a decision to discontinue men's and women's swimming and diving, women's water polo, and men's tennis as varsity sports. In conjunction with this decision, a committee of trustees, staff, coaches, and student-athletes will formulate plans to repurpose the pool area. This effort will be part of an extensive renovation of Clark Athletic Center that will support the entire athletics division.

We understand that this is difficult news for the current student-athletes who are directly affected as well as their coaches and the alumni who have represented Utica in these four sports over the years. The decision to discontinue these programs follows many years of thorough analysis, including in-depth consultation with Title IX experts, and is based on a combination of multiple factors. The two principal factors that ultimately drove this decision are as follows.

- **Continuously declining student interest** – Despite considerable efforts and new recruitment strategies, and despite the growth of our athletics program as a whole, swimming and diving, water polo, and men's tennis have not generated enrollment sufficient to routinely field competitive NCAA rosters. This is a trend that is not unique to Utica University, has spanned many years, and is reflective of decreasing participation in these sports at the high school and junior college levels, especially in the Northeast.
- **High renovation costs** – Continuation of aquatic sports at Utica would require major renovations to our 50-year-old pool that would necessitate an investment of several million dollars in addition to significant operating expenses for years to come.

In the end, it became increasingly clear that the University cannot offer the kind of competitive experience to student-athletes in these four programs as we do for the more than 600 student-athletes who participate in our other 25 varsity sports. At the same time, it is incumbent upon us as an institution to steward our resources in a way that clearly reflects sustained student interest, making thoughtful investments that yield exceptional experiences for the greatest number of students.

We have met with the approximately 15 student-athletes impacted by this decision and assured them that we will continue to support them however we can. In addition, the affected coaches will remain members of our athletics department.

I strongly believe that this decision honors our longstanding commitment to supporting a strong intercollegiate athletics program and will help fuel our continued success and growth across a broad range of sports in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Casamento  
President