

Department of Intercollegiate Athletics

(White Paper Analysis)

Introduction

UW Intercollegiate Athletics has been and remains an integral part of the University of Wyoming and its overall mission. One of the key components of the University's mission is "to promote opportunities for personal growth, physical health, athletic competition and leadership development for all members of the university community". Our athletic programs not only contribute to the University's mission in these key areas, but also frequently provide "outreach" opportunities across Wyoming and the region.

Intercollegiate Athletics is, in fact, at the core of the university mission. Our coaches and staff educate young people everyday about important topics such as teamwork, discipline, leadership, diversity, communication and the value of education. An undergraduate professor at UW has the opportunity to spend up to 60 (sixty) hours in a semester "teaching" a student. Within Intercollegiate Athletics, a coach may interact (in a teaching role – mentoring, study halls, travel, etc.) with the student athlete 60 (sixty) hours in a given week. The influence of coaches in intercollegiate athletics is second to none. Granted, the largest "teaching" segment may involve the technical skills to be good diver, golfer, swimmer, etc., but many hours are also targeted toward leadership development, study skills, discipline, and other areas of personal growth.

The very nature of Intercollegiate Athletics creates a learning environment that emphasizes personal growth and development physically, mentally, academically and socially for each and every student athlete, as previously stated. All of these areas are also key core values for the overall student body at the University of Wyoming.

The vast majority of the budgetary funds and resources that are utilized by Intercollegiate Athletics are directed toward this extremely important goal of promoting and supporting student-athlete welfare. Our sport programs, academic support services, athletic training room staff, strength and conditioning supervision, facility operations, compliance and equity personnel and senior management all work daily to make sure that each student has an environment that allows them to maximize their training, educational development, athletic abilities and academic achievements.

Another key aspect of Intercollegiate Athletics that positively contributes to the University's mission is the ability to provide local, statewide, regional, national and even international visibility and exposure opportunities for the University and the State of Wyoming.

As a result of this high level of visibility (via media coverage), intercollegiate athletic programs, in general, are often described as the “front porch” of a university. People very often see and draw conclusions about the university through the stories and images provided about athletics. So when athletics can achieve successes, people from throughout the country have a chance to draw positive perceptions about university as a whole. These positive institutional images have strong correlations to increased student enrollments, enhanced school spirit and state morale, strengthened university reputations, stronger alumni connections, greater levels of private fundraising and more positive legislative/ government support.

Intercollegiate Athletics also provides numerous contributions in the university’s objectives toward higher/ more effective levels of diversity and the creation of a learning environment that provides possibilities for individual growth, physical health, leadership development and mutual respect (sportsmanship).

Although athletic department diversity varies greatly among higher education institutions across the country, at the University of Wyoming, Intercollegiate Athletics provides opportunities for numerous minority groups (both employees and student athletes) that positively enhance the diversity level of the campus. Given that the state of Wyoming is often referred to as the “Equality State” and that diversity objectives are a key goal of the NCAA, which our athletic programs are a part of, the Intercollegiate Athletic Department is proud to assist the university in its ongoing goal of increased diversity.

With these areas supporting and complementing the overall mission / goals of the university, Intercollegiate Athletics has developed and implemented its own mission statement, which is articulated below:

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the University of Wyoming Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is to provide an environment in which student - athletes complete their undergraduate college education and achieve athletics success at the highest possible level. As Wyoming’s only four year University, we are committed to offering a first class competitive athletics program at the NCAA Division IA level that promotes the values of the state and assists in carrying out the overall University of Wyoming mission.

CORE VALUES

- We must maintain a proper balance between academics and athletics.
- We support the student-athlete as a whole person – academically, athletically, in career development, community service, and related to personal well being.

- We believe college athletics develops discipline, character and teamwork...all necessary ingredients for individual leadership and achievement.
- Our student- athletes, coaches and staff must uphold a sense of character, honesty, and integrity as they serve as University and state ambassadors on a local, regional, national and international level.
- We believe we can achieve athletic success on a regional and national level. We must accomplish this without compromising any of our other core values.
- We believe long term athletic success increases exposure for the University's academic and research mission and provides regional and national exposure for the state of Wyoming across the United States.
- We must operate in a fiscally sound manner. We strive to balance state, university and self generated resources to create a competitive and appropriate budget.
- We believe first class facilities are an important part of our ability to compete at the highest level. We are committed to building and renovating the facilities necessary to be successful as well as maintaining the great facilities that we already have.
- We are committed to recruiting Wyoming students prepared for Division IA competition.
- We are committed to being a positive campus partner. We will strive to strengthen and build relationships with students, faculty, administrators, and staff from other areas of campus.
- We are committed to being a positive city, county and state partner. We strive to strengthen and build relationships with the Laramie City Council and the Laramie City operating departments, Albany County government, the Wyoming Legislature, and Wyoming state elected officials and state agencies.
- We believe in empowering individuals (student-athletes, coaches and staff) to make decisions that will lead to their success. With that privilege comes responsibility and accountability.
- We are committed to excellence in customer service. Every UW alumnus, ticket holder, fan or contributor must be treated with the utmost respect. We strive to communicate openly and honestly with every constituent.
- We will promote good sportsmanship in all athletic endeavors.
- We are committed to fair and equitable treatment of student-athletes and staff. We will maintain an environment that promotes gender equity and embraces diversity.
- Our work environment will be positive, enjoyable and family friendly.

ATHLETIC STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2009-2014

With these core values in place and in use...Intercollegiate Athletics has completed its first 5 year strategic plan (2003-2008) and is embarking on its second strategic plan which will begin in 2009 and continue on through 2014. This new strategic plan will be referred to as “Wyoming Pride” and integrates the following four areas:

- **Athletic Excellence**
- **Academic / Community Success**
- **Equitable and Inclusive Environments**
- **Facility Enhancements**
- **Enhanced Campus Partnerships**

ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE

Although athletic excellence can and is defined differently based on the institution, at the University of Wyoming, we are defining it as:

“Athletic excellence is when our athletics programs finish in the upper-half of the conference and we secure Mountain West Conference championships. In individual sports, it is when student athletes compete for conference championships and national recognition.”

Thus, to achieve athletic excellence, Intercollegiate Athletics must develop an approach that strategically defines areas of focus, based on our assets/resources which can then be effectively applied toward the challenges and obstacles that we are confronted with. An analysis of each sport must be conducted to determine, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Since it is unrealistic and financially infeasible to fund all sport programs at the same level, strategically sound decisions must be made built around not only our ability to be successful but also our probability of success.

Once the analysis process is complete, strategic decisions not only must be made to allocate resources in an equitable manner, but also with the goal in mind of allowing for the greatest levels of success in both men’s and women’s sports. Strong investments must be made in:

- **Recruitment and retention of high potential student athletes and coaches**
- **Enhanced support services**
- **Improved and advantageous team travel methods**

Recruiting top quality student-athletes and coaches is the most critical element to achieving success both athletically and academically. To make this goal an ongoing reality, the following steps must be taken:

1. Provide the necessary resources for coaches to be able to properly evaluate prospective student-athletes as well as developing personal relationships with club/high school coaches, parents and the student-athletes themselves.
2. Strive to be on the cutting edge of technology as it relates to marketing our programs through the internet and utilizing internet technology to both identify and evaluate student-athletes. Becoming creative as it relates to technology is essential so link our University with the many different population centers (domestically and internationally).
3. Provide the appropriate level of financial support that allows us to overcome the challenges that are present due to our remote geographic location.
4. Enhance salary incentives to allow recruitment and retention of high level quality coaches and staffs.
5. Provide coaching staffs with professional training to enhance their skills and improve their ability to recruit high potential student-athletes.

ENHANCE SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing appropriate and effective support services for student-athletes is essential in order for them to develop and excel both athletically and academically. Key action items in this area are:

1. Provide our strength and conditioning training staff with the necessary equipment and support (financial and personnel) to properly develop and train the “total” student-athlete so that they may be prepared to perform at an optimum level.
2. Provide Sports Medicine (training room staff) with the necessary equipment and support (financial and personnel) to properly assess, prevent and treat/rehabilitate injuries and illnesses.
3. Provide state of the art technology to sport program coaches, in the area of computers and computerized editing/video equipment for both pre-game preparation, post- game review and prospective student-athlete evaluation.
4. Provide professional development opportunities for Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches in the areas of teaching, skill development, game strategies, etc.

IMPROVED AND ADVANTAGEOUS TEAM TRAVEL METHODS

One of the greatest obstacles to success that UW sport programs are confronted with is the numerous travel challenges including travel from a remote geographic location (Laramie), severe weather that closes highways, limited access to air travel available via the Laramie Regional Airport and ongoing financial problems with commercial airline carriers.

To address these significant issues or to at least minimize the competitive disadvantage that they present, the following plans must be investigated and implemented if possible:

1. Investigate ways (financially) to travel via charter flights vs commercial airlines. In the sports of men's, women's basketball and volleyball, where games are played in mid-week, difficult travel, lengthy travel periods and frequently missed class time puts our teams at a severe disadvantage both competitively and in the classroom.
2. Consider purchasing a minimum of 2 high end buses (47-55 passengers) that we could loan or lease to other groups when available and appropriate. Current bus travel in and out of Laramie, has reached a cost of \$175,000 or more annually. Lease or purchase of buses would provide some additional travel options for our sports teams instead of in-inefficiently expending monies with bus companies outside of our area. Perhaps a cooperative partnership with Trans Park could be established.

ACADEMIC/COMMUNITY SUCCESS

Critical to the mission of Intercollegiate Athletics is the balance that must be maintained between academic achievement and athletic success. To achieve these two parallel goals is frequently quite challenging and, in fact, quite often appear in opposition with each other. Due to these challenges support programs are implemented, modified and refined to make sure that both of these two goals can be successfully accomplished.

The continuation of our academic support review and planning leads us to the following objectives:

1. Improve our ability to effectively support our student-athletes who encounter difficult challenges with the transition to Division I athletics and the college academic/social environment. This is not limited to just international student-athletes, but applies to all student-athletes who are struggling with their transition to college.
2. Re-organize and improve our support structure in our academic support services to achieve higher retention numbers throughout our sport programs.
3. Provide support structure through academic services (athletics and university) to assist student-athletes with cultural changes. The time demands on student-athletes are extreme and the transition from one environment (i.e. rural or international) to the expectations of college can often be highly stressful and at times overwhelming.

4. Establish aggressive but achievable academic goals, regarding (but not limited to) the APR, GSR and sport team GPA. These goals should be established by each Head Coach in conjunction with their sport supervisor. Both short term (less than 1 year) and long term (greater than one year) goals should be established.

EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Within Intercollegiate Athletics a key goal should be to develop and nurture a culture that recognizes the value of an inclusive environment and how such an environment can positively affect team building from the individual level and department wide. Targeted ideas to accomplish this objective are:

1. Engage the staff in a training process to facilitate and support diversity during the hiring process for employees and during the recruitment of student-athletes.
2. Engage the university to assist with strategies that will provide avenues for international student-athletes to obtain guidance and assistance as they transition into the University of Wyoming and college life.
3. Integrate our student-athletes into the University community through increased involvement in university activities and community programs.
4. Continue to monitor gender equity and Title IX issues, with the goal of providing the best opportunities for both genders.
5. Develop and monitor the following Improvement Plans from the NCAA Certification process:
 - Gender Issues
 - Diversity Issues
 - Student-Athlete Well Being

FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS

One of the most important aspects of a successful intercollegiate athletics program are the training facilities, sports medicine facilities, meeting/video review areas, team rooms, academic support areas, practice venues and competition venues. Having quality facilities has perhaps become the single most important item when a coach or student-athlete is deciding whether to become an employee / student at a particular institution. Over the last 10 years, new facilities and enhancements to existing facilities has been a priority within the Intercollegiate Athletics strategic plan. This will continue to be a priority in our 2009-2014 strategic plan. The following will be key areas of concentration in the area of facility enhancements:

- Completion of east stadium construction including suites, club seats, concession areas, public restrooms, ADA access/seating, structural repairs, etc.
- Paving of stadium parking lot inclusive of new drainage system.
- Updating lower west side bathrooms and concessions in stadium including ADA improvements
- ADA improvements to Arena Auditorium and west side of stadium
- Improvements to Arena Auditorium including ADA improvements, renovations to concourse, enhanced lighting, handrails in aisles, completing historical timeline, updating training rooms and weight room areas
- Renovation and updating of football press box (west side of stadium)
- Construction of Indoor Tennis Center for UW and community use.
- Installation of lights at Louis S. Madrid Sports Complex (Soccer/Track)
- Re-surfacing of indoor track facility, updated lighting for Field house and scoreboard.
- New location for athletic facilities to operate from and to store equipment (i.e. mowers, tractors, snow removal equipment, trucks, etc)
- Convert current athletic facilities offices into wrestling offices/team rooms which will be immediately adjacent to their practice venue, competition venue and locker rooms.
- Evaluate possibility of separate basketball practice facility for men's and women's basketball programs
- Conduct a thorough review, needs assessment, cost/benefit analysis and funding plan to address Corbett Pool problems as a training and competition venue.
- Conduct a thorough review, needs assessment, cost/benefit analysis and funding plan for a golf practice facility. This should be a privately funded venture and should be a potential opportunity as a part of the east campus long range development plan.
- Continue to do office and hallway enhancements with updated furniture, carpet, wall designs, improved lighting, etc. First impressions during the recruiting process often require a "wow" effect with regard to facilities.
- Update and improve men's/women's track locker room
- Upgrade cardio/rehab/weight equipment in sports medicine and strength and conditioning areas

ENHANCE CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS

Intercollegiate Athletics believes in the importance of being good partners with the numerous departments and personnel that make up the University of Wyoming campus. In one manner or another, our athletic department student-athletes and employees have interactions with every aspect of university. This includes all areas of academia, university administration / management, financial aid, payroll, human resources, university accounting, purchasing, housing, food services, campus transportation, the student union, the library, campus recreation, etc.

Positive relationships, built on mutual respect, have been established between Intercollegiate Athletics and these campus departments. At one time or another each of the areas on campus have assisted us and allowed to overcome some challenge or obstacle. We are both grateful and thankful for this continuing support and we hope that in some way, we have been able to be good partners as well.

A continuing goal of our strategic plan is for Intercollegiate Athletics to continue to seek out ways to enhance our existing campus relationships and nurture / develop new partnerships both departmentally and on an individual level.

To successfully achieve both the University's mission and that of Intercollegiate Athletics, the teamwork of the entire university is necessary. Working to be an effective part of the university "team" is a goal that Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to.

BUDGETS AND FINANCIALS

From a budget perspective, the University of Wyoming Intercollegiate Athletics program (\$22 million) remains at or near the bottom (8th or 9th ...out of nine schools) in the Mountain West Conference. The conference institutions which we compete against are Air Force, BYU, Colorado State, New Mexico, San Diego State, TCU, UNLV and Utah.

The UW Intercollegiate Athletic budget is made up of approximately 50% Section I (State) funding and 50% Section II (self generated) funding.

With the \$22 million budget, Intercollegiate Athletics funds 17 sport programs (8 men's sports and 9 women's sports) and a cheer squad. Our sports programs are:

Men's Sports

Football
Basketball
Wrestling
Swimming/Diving
Golf
Outdoor Track
Indoor Track
Cross Country

Women's Sports

Volleyball
Basketball
Soccer
Swimming/Diving
Golf
Outdoor Track
Indoor Track
Cross Country
Tennis

Support organizations (with operating budgets) within Intercollegiate Athletics are: Academic Services, Sports Medicine, Strength and Conditioning, Media Relations, Athletic Facilities, Athletic Equipment Room, Ticket Office, Marketing and Promotions, Athletic Concessions, Game Management, Athletic Directors Office (inclusive of Compliance and Senior Administration), Athletic Business Office and Audiovisual Services.

The Intercollegiate Athletic operating budget can be broken down into the following major categories:

Salaries/Payroll (approx. 115 employees)	\$7,998,158	(36% of budget)
*Scholarships (approx . 400 std-athletes)	\$4,573,911	(20% of budget)
Team Travel (17 sports)	\$1,703,000	(8% of budget)
Recruiting travel	\$560,950	(3% of budget)
Medical Insurance/Services	\$470,000	(2% of budget)
Game Guarantees (Visiting Teams)	\$1,041,500	(5% of budget)
*Spec. Proj. (Equip./ Facility Improvements)	\$293,337	(1% of budget)
Equipment/Supplies (Uniforms, Practice clothing, shoes, protective equipment, etc)	\$407,596	(2% of budget)
*Facility Maintenance (exclusive of payroll)	\$261,200	(1% of budget)
Game Operations	\$220,000	(1% of budget)
Video Scoreboard Loan (Stadium & Arena)	\$215,247	(1% of budget)
Athletic Concessions	\$299,000	(1% of budget)
Officiating Fees / Travel Costs	\$261,870	(1% of budget)
*Obligation to the General Fund	\$1,832,500	(8% of budget)
Conference Fees	\$400,000	(2% of budget)
Consignment Ticket Expenses	\$401,000	(2% of budget)
MWC Basketball Tournament Expenses	\$180,000	(1% of budget)
*Operating Expenses (Telephone, Printing, Repair/ Maint. , Postage, Freight, Copy/Photo Charges, Subscriptions, Office Supplies, Meetings/Convention travel, Food Service Costs, Dues/Fees, etc.)	\$1,201,294	(5% of budget)

***Note that most if not all of the funds from these categories are paid back to the University and returns back into the University “cash flow”.**

BUDGET CHALLENGES

With utilization of the Intercollegiate Athletics budget distributed as previously outlined, a number of challenges present themselves as we move forward.

In order to position our programs to be able to achieve “competitive athletic excellence,” resources must continue to be available and/ or improve both in our sport programs and our support services areas.

In the body of this document, it has been identified that it is extremely important to have appropriate funding for:

- Top level facilities
- Salary/incentive compensation to attract and retain highly qualified coaches and staff
- Travel / recruiting budgets that allow us to overcome the limitations of our remote geographic location
- Funds to keep our academic / compliance services, strength and conditioning, sports medicine, equipment room, and athletic facilities support operating at the highest level of support possible.

Intercollegiate Athletics must also continue to find ways to generate more Section II (self generated funds), which unfortunately is tied to having successful “winning” programs. Fans (ticket purchasers), corporate sponsors and donors all provide higher levels of financial support when they can become excited and passionate about a team’s success.

Over the last couple of years, a number of coaching changes (football, men’s basketball, volleyball, wrestling and soccer) have been decided upon. These changes will bear positive results in the upcoming years, which will lead to the higher levels of attendance, larger investments by corporate sponsors and greater levels of giving by our donors.

Potential Budget Reduction

Unfortunately, in the short term, the university, the state and the nation is dealing with an economic downturn. Although the State of Wyoming finds itself in better financial position than most of the U.S., that does not mean that we should not analyze, evaluate and prepare plans, in case the state and the University's financial situation worsens.

Intercollegiate Athletics, as a division of the overall university, has analyzed its financials and has developed 5% and 10% budgetary reductions. Both of these plans come with some concerning and unsettling consequences, so we are certainly hopeful that the university does not reach the point where these plans become a necessity. With that said, our **5% plan** is as follows:

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| 1. Re-alignment of Athletic Training Curriculum
(Academically focused - degree program – not athletic support unit) | \$85,000 |
| 2. Re-organize student athlete support areas
(Strength/Conditioning, Training Room, OAS) | \$43,755 |
| 3. Downsizing Cheer/ Dance program (Wildfire) | \$16,000 |
| 4. Absorb W Club into Cowboy Joe Club operations | \$22,500 |
| 5. Reduction of Special Projects funding
(Facility enhancements, special equip. purchases, etc) | \$74,200 |
| 6. Reduction of game guarantees (visiting teams) | \$230,000 |
| 7. Reimburse mileage for personal/courtesy vehicles
(Use 75% of federal rate) | \$10,000 |
| 8. Reduce number of media guides and posters | \$10,000 |
| 9. Reduce professional development
(Selectively attend and limit number of people) | \$10,000 |
| 10. Eliminate uniform expense in volleyball | \$20,000 |
| 11. Elim./reduce amount of UW coaches/staff equip. | \$12,000 |
| 12. Elim./reduce amts. of food/drink in media areas
(Arena Auditorium, Stadium press box, UniWyo Sports Complex, etc.) | \$20,000 |
| TOTAL | \$553,455 |

A ten percent **(10%) plan** would require these actions **plus the elimination of one or more sport programs.** Due to gender equity and Title IX, women's sports programs cannot be eliminated so certain men's sports would most likely be the programs that would be under consideration for elimination if the necessity for a 10% reduction becomes a reality.

Sport program elimination has occurred at the University of Wyoming before with the sports of baseball and women's softball.

As those who were involved in these previous sport program eliminations can attest, the consequences and the impacts of such a decision are significant, highly emotional and dramatically polarizing...and continue on for years... well after the action is taken.

Intercollegiate Athletics hopes that the state and the university's financial position does not reach a point where such a decision becomes necessary.

