



SENATE RESOLUTION #3085

TITLE: ASUW Opposition to the Wyoming State Legislature Joint Recommendation to Deny \$6 Million Request for University of Wyoming Athletics

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/30/2026

AUTHOR: Senators Wellikson & Robinson

SPONSORS: Senators Golden, Moore, Smith; Safety, Wellness, and Advocacy Committee, Steering; Chief of Legislative Affairs Heffley; Student at Large Ward, Muzquiz, Alday, Mejia, Ruiz, Gonzalez, Zubia, Nava-Castillo, Hernandez Jimenez, Mora, Reyes, Lawler, Garcia, Sanchez, Garcia, Delgado, Sosa, McAdams, Derksen, Parrill, Novotny, Lopez, Chacon, Tzompa; Kappa Kappa Psi, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán of UWYO,

1. WHEREAS, the purpose of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming
2. (ASUW) is to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible; and,
3. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming is Wyoming’s only four-year public
4. institution and serves as a critical pillar of the state’s educational system, economic
5. development, workforce pipeline, and civic life; and,
6. WHEREAS, Article 7, Section 16 of the Wyoming Constitution requires that education
7. at the University of Wyoming be kept “as nearly free as possible,” as reflected in
8. Addendum B; and,
9. WHEREAS, reductions in state support undermine this constitutional guarantee by
10. shifting the financial burden onto students and their families through increased tuition
11. and fees, a shift recently adopted by many universities, reflected in Addenda L-P; and,
12. WHEREAS, the University of Wyoming Athletics Department constitutes a strategic
13. public investment that strengthens statewide identity, student engagement, alumni

14. connection, and national visibility for Wyoming; and,

15. WHEREAS, statewide public opinion data demonstrates broad and consistent support

16. for UW Athletics, with 84% of Wyoming residents identifying the athletic programs as

17. a source of pride and 65% viewing them as extremely important to the state's identity

18. and reputation, as reflected in Addenda C and D; and,

19. WHEREAS, a majority of Wyoming residents support public investment in UW

20. Athletics, with 54% explicitly supporting the use of state-appropriated funds and 46%

21. supporting increased funding so long as it does not require a tax increase, as reflected in

22. Addenda C and D; and,

23. WHEREAS, the Athletics Department has requested \$6 million in state funding to

24. comply with newly mandated NCAA settlement requirements related to student-athlete

25. compensation and Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), as reflected in Addendum A; and,

26. WHEREAS, this request does not represent an expansion of the athletic program, but is

27. necessary to maintain existing operations and institutional compliance; and,

28. WHEREAS, Athletic Director Tom Burman has stated that without this funding, the

29. University would have to choose between remaining in Division I or dropping to a lower

30. level of competition, which would significantly reduce the University's visibility,

31. competitiveness, and recruitment capacity, as reflected in Addendum E; and,

32. WHEREAS, public opinion data indicate that Wyoming residents overwhelmingly view

33. the loss of Division I status as harmful to the University of Wyoming's reputation and

34. statewide standing, as reflected in Addenda C, D, and E; and,

35. WHEREAS, insufficient funding would place non-revenue "Olympic" sports at risk of

36. elimination, despite their strong academic performance, high graduation rates, and

37. meaningful participation opportunities for students; and,

38. WHEREAS, the elimination of athletic programs would likely force student-athletes to

39. leave the University and state all together, accelerating talent and workforce loss while

40. signaling diminished educational opportunity for Wyoming students; and,

41. WHEREAS, Division I athletics functions as a reliable economic driver for the City of

42. Laramie and surrounding communities, generating substantial visitor spending, tax

43. revenue, and seasonal employment, as reflected in Addendum F; and,

44. WHEREAS, UW Athletics produces an estimated \$206.4 million in total average annual

45. economic impact, representing a 34-to-1 return on state investment, as reflected in

46. Addendum F; and,

47. WHEREAS, continued underinvestment in UW athletics risks pushing the program

48. toward privatization or outside control, as has occurred at other universities in recent

49. years, as reflected in Addenda G, H, and I; and,

50. WHEREAS, such a shift would undermine the principle that Wyoming's only public

51. university should be governed by and for the people of Wyoming; and,

52. WHEREAS, Wyoming is not experiencing a fiscal crisis and is projected to retain

53. substantial budgetary reserves, as reflected in Addenda J and K; and,

54. WHEREAS, the State realized \$1.86 billion in investment earnings in Fiscal Year

55. 2025, and the \$6 million Athletics request represents less than 0.5% of the \$1.38

56. billion Rainy Day Fund balance, as reflected in Addenda J and K; and,

57. THEREFORE, be it resolved, that ASUW urges the Wyoming State Legislature to fully

58. fund the University of Wyoming Athletics Department's \$6 million request; and,

59. THEREFORE, be it resolved, that ASUW calls upon the State of Wyoming to honor its

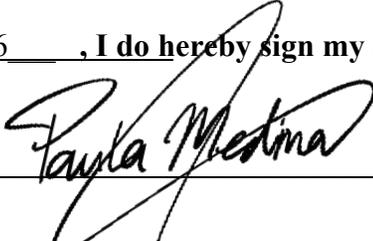
- 60. constitutional responsibility to accessible, high-quality public higher education by
- 61. sustaining the long-term viability, competitiveness, and statewide impact of the
- 62. University of Wyoming; and,
- 63. THEREFORE, be it resolved that upon passage of this legislation, it be circulated to the
- 64. Vice President of Government and Community Affairs Mike Smith, UW President
- 65. Seidel, UW Board of Trustees, the Wyoming State Legislature, and the JAC.

Referred to: _____ Committee of the Whole _____

Date of Passage: 2/3/26 Signed: Aidan McGuire
(ASUW Chairperson)

“Being enacted on 2/3/26, I do hereby sign my name hereto and approve this

Senate action.” _____


ASUW President

ADDENDUM A - University of Wyoming 2027–2028 Biennium Budget Request (pg 30)

2027 - 2028 BIENNIUM

UNIT NARRATIVE

30

DEPARTMENT UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
 DIVISION STATE AID
 UNIT BASE FUNDING

Wyoming On Line Financial Codes

DEPT	DIVISION	UNIT	FUND	APPR
067	6700	6701	001	670

PRIORITY # 3 – Athletic Operating Support

A. EXPLANATION OF REQUEST: The University respectfully requests \$3,000,000 in recurring annual state support to sustain and strengthen its Division I athletics programs. This request is driven by new financial obligations resulting from the House v. NCAA settlement, approved on June 6, 2025, as well as rising operational costs and the need to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving collegiate athletics landscape.

The settlement fundamentally reshapes the financial structure of college athletics, requiring institutions to directly support student-athletes through compensation, expanded benefits, and compliance measures. UW's projected obligations include:

- NCAA Distribution Reduction: Loss of approximately \$550,000 annually in NCAA revenue.
- Scholarship Expansion: Targeted increase of \$350,000 annually in women's sports scholarships to meet Title IX compliance.
- Post-Eligibility Support: Estimated \$350,000 annually for health care and academic benefits for student-athletes after eligibility ends.
- New media rights agreement: Estimated decrease of \$1,000,000 per year as a result of changes in conference membership.
- Operational Cost Increases: The remaining \$750,000 annually will offset rising costs in travel, medical care, nutrition, equipment, facilities maintenance.

State investment in UW Athletics is a strategic commitment to Wyoming's identity, students, and national visibility. UW's athletics programs:

- Serve as a statewide unifier, fostering pride and engagement across communities.
- Enhance student recruitment and retention, including for non-athletes.
- Drive economic activity through tourism, media exposure, and alumni giving.

B. REQUEST BY OBJECT CODE, FUNDING AMOUNT & FUND SOURCE:

Object Code	Amount	Funding Source
1 0626 - Grant Payments	\$6,000,000	100% General Fund
Total	\$6,000,000	100% Revenue Code 1001 - General Fund

C. JUSTIFICATION / CONSEQUENCES: Without additional investment, UW risks falling behind peer institutions in the Mountain West Conference and beyond—jeopardizing its ability to recruit top talent, comply with federal mandates, and maintain the quality and integrity of its athletics programs. UW's athletics programs are a vital part of the state's identity and higher education.

D. MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT OR MAINTENANCE OF EQUITY: N/A

E. ETS APPROVAL NUMBER (IF APPLICABLE): N/A

ADDENDUM B – Article 7, Section 16 “Tuition free” of Constitution of the State of Wyoming

Article 7, Section 16 Tuition free.

The university shall be equally open to students of both sexes, irrespective of race or color; and, in order that the instruction furnished may be as nearly free as possible, any amount in addition to the income from its grants of lands and other sources above mentioned, necessary to its support and maintenance in a condition of full efficiency shall be raised by taxation or otherwise, under provisions of the legislature.

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Addendum C – Institutional Communications Department Article on Survey about Support of UW Athletics

Survey Finds Strong Statewide Support for UW Athletics

Published December 11, 2025



[MORE NEWS →](#)



Fans fill UW's War Memorial Stadium during the 2025 football season. A new survey shows that 58 percent of Wyomingites attend at least one UW athletic contest each year, with 87 percent describing themselves as avid or casual fans. (UW Photo)

A large majority of Wyomingites say the University of Wyoming's athletics programs are important to the state's identity and reputation, enhance UW's prestige and visibility, and should be supported by state funding, a new survey has found.

The survey of Wyoming residents was conducted by the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center to gauge public perspectives on UW's NCAA Division I athletics programs amid a rapidly changing collegiate athletics landscape. The results show strong interest in and support of UW Athletics.

"We have always known that Wyoming fans have a great deal of pride and passion for our programs, but these survey results show a breadth of interest and support around the state that goes even beyond what we expected," says Tom Burman, UW's director of intercollegiate athletics. "It's clear that the people of Wyoming are behind the Cowboys and Cowgirls and want us to succeed at the highest levels possible."

Among the findings:

-- Asked to what extent they agree UW athletics programs are a source of pride for the state, 28 percent agreed, and 56 percent strongly agreed, for a total of 84 percent. Just 6 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

-- Asked how important UW athletics programs are to the identity and reputation of the state, 36 percent said "extremely important"; 29 percent said "very important"; and 19 percent said "moderately important," for a total of 84 percent. Just 16 percent said "not at all important" or "slightly important."

-- Asked to what extent they agree UW athletics programs enhance the visibility and prestige of the university, 39 percent strongly agreed, and 34 percent agreed, for a total of 73 percent. Just 9 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The survey of 850 randomly selected Wyoming residents was conducted from Sept. 5-Nov. 25. A random sample of over 6,000 mailing addresses in the state was drawn, resulting in a nearly equal probability of selection for all Wyoming households. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points. The final survey data have been weighted to reflect the actual population distribution in Wyoming on sex, age and county of residence.

Some 25 percent of Wyomingites describe themselves as avid, involved UW sports fans, with 62 percent saying they're casual fans, for a total of 87 percent. About 9 percent of respondents said they follow UW sports extremely closely; 23 percent very closely; and 35 percent somewhat closely, for a total of 67 percent. The programs with the highest level of fan support, in order, are football, men's basketball, women's basketball, rodeo, volleyball and wrestling.

Some 25 percent of Wyomingites describe themselves as avid, involved UW sports fans, with 62 percent saying they're casual fans, for a total of 87 percent. About 9 percent of respondents said they follow UW sports extremely closely; 23 percent very closely; and 35 percent somewhat closely, for a total of 67 percent. The programs with the highest level of fan support, in order, are football, men's basketball, women's basketball, rodeo, volleyball and wrestling.

Some 26 percent of respondents reported that they attend Cowboys and/or Cowgirls games once a year; 21 percent attend a few times a year; and 11 percent attend many times a year or nearly always for the sports they follow. A minority of 42 percent said they don't attend UW games in person, with travel distance and weather conditions being the biggest factors.

The survey also gauged levels of support for state funding of UW Athletics, with these findings:

-- Asked to what extent they agree that taxpayer funding of Cowboy and Cowgirl athletics programs represents a good investment for the state, 34 percent agreed and 11 percent strongly agreed, for a total of 45 percent. Disagreeing were 26 percent, with 29 percent neutral.

-- Asked how strongly they support or oppose the use of state-appropriated dollars to support UW athletics programs, 20 percent responded "strongly support" and 34 percent said "support," for a total of 54 percent. Opposing or strongly opposing were 17 percent, with 30 percent neutral.

Since 2015, UW Athletics has received a \$5 million annual legislative appropriation that is used as matching funds for donations to the Cowboy Joe Club, UW Athletics' booster club. The dollars are used only for purposes such as recruiting, team travel, student-athlete nutrition and equipment. The dollars are not used for salaries or construction.

Asked to what extent they agree it's an appropriate use of state funds, 65 percent strongly agreed or agreed; 17 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed; and 18 percent were neutral. And 46 percent would support increasing state funding for those purposes -- as long as it didn't require a tax increase -- with 28 percent opposed and 26 percent neutral.

Finally, the survey found that 81 percent of Wyomingites strongly agree that the state's bucking horse and rider logo is an important symbol of both the state and UW Athletics, with an additional 11 percent agreeing. Just 4 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. In fact, some 81 percent say they own apparel or other merchandise featuring the bucking horse and rider logo.

To see complete survey results and methodology, go [here](#).

Addendum D - University of Wyoming Athletic Department Survey, 2025 (pg 9 – 15)

Key Findings

Survey items were categorized into the following themes: Interest & Engagement, Fan Identity, UW Athletics & State Identity, Branding, and Funding & Investment. This section presents select results and discussion of survey items within each theme.

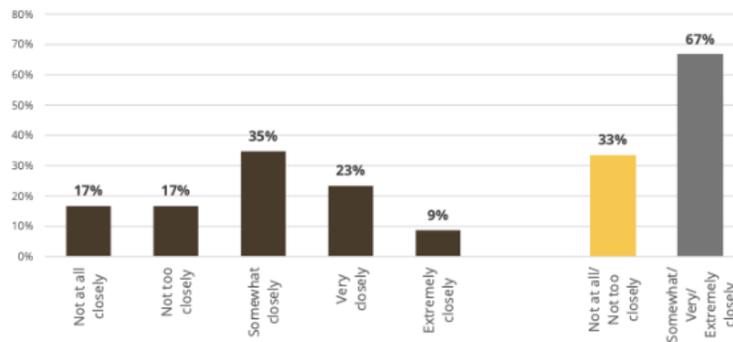
Interest & Engagement

Two-thirds (67%) of Wyoming residents say they follow any of the University of Wyoming Cowboys and/or Cowgirls sports closely (*somewhat closely, very closely, extremely closely*). This proportion of residents is significantly higher than national benchmarks - According to a 2023 study by the Pew Research Center², only 37% of Americans say they follow any professional or collegiate sports somewhat, very, or extremely closely.

In terms of watching a broadcast or stream of a game or event, one-third (33%) watch games *a few times a season*, with another 30% watching *most or all* games.

Figure 1

How closely, if at all, do you follow any of the University of Wyoming Cowboys and/or Cowgirls sports?

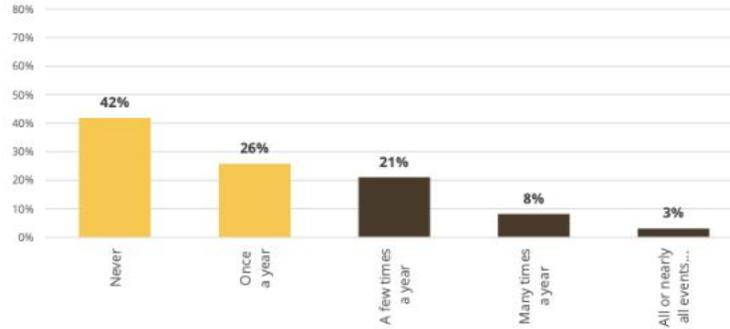


² Pew Research Center. (2023, October 17). Most Americans don't closely follow professional or college sports. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/17/most-americans-dont-closely-follow-professional-or-college-sports/>

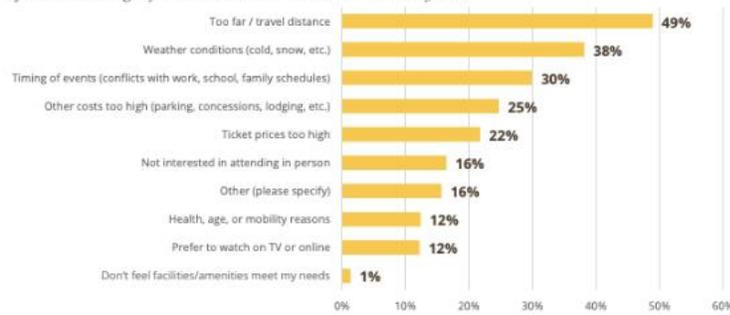
Just under one-third (32%) of residents say they attend a Cowboys or Cowgirls event in person a few times a year or more, while 42% say they never attend. Of those that say they attend once a year or never, the top reasons indicated for not attending more events in person are too far/travel distance (49%), weather conditions (38%), and timing of events (30%).

Figure 2

How often do you attend Cowboys and/or Cowgirls games or events in person?



What are the main reasons you do not attend Cowboys and/or Cowgirls games or events in person more often? (Percentage of those who attend "Never" or "Once a year")

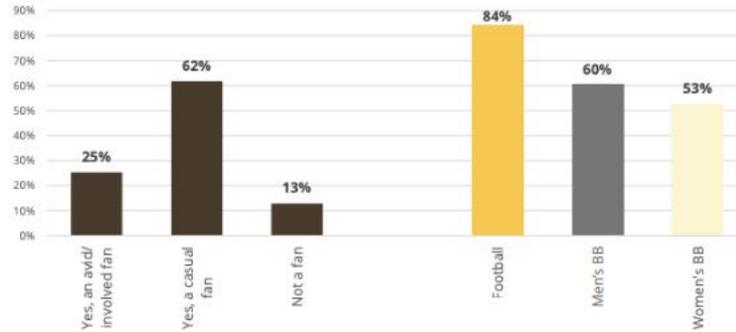


Fan Identity

Nearly 9 in 10 Wyoming residents (87%) self-identify as either an *avid/involved fan* or a *casual fan*. Only 13% say they are *not a fan* when asked to describe themselves. The UW football team is the primary anchor of fan identity in the state, with 84% indicating they are a fan of the program. A majority of residents also indicated men's basketball (60%) and women's basketball (53%) as programs they are fans of.

Figure 3

Would you describe yourself as a fan of the University of Wyoming Cowboys and/or Cowgirls?



"The Cowboys and Cowgirls athletic programs unify Wyoming and create a shared sense of pride and identity. Student-athletes serve as role models for youth, by demonstrating discipline, scholarship, perseverance, and character. War Memorial Stadium becomes a statewide reunion on fall Saturdays, allowing for alumni, families, and fans to reconnect. The programs extend beyond athletics by strengthening community bonds, inspire the next generation, and serves as a rallying point for Wyoming's collective spirit."

– Albany County Resident

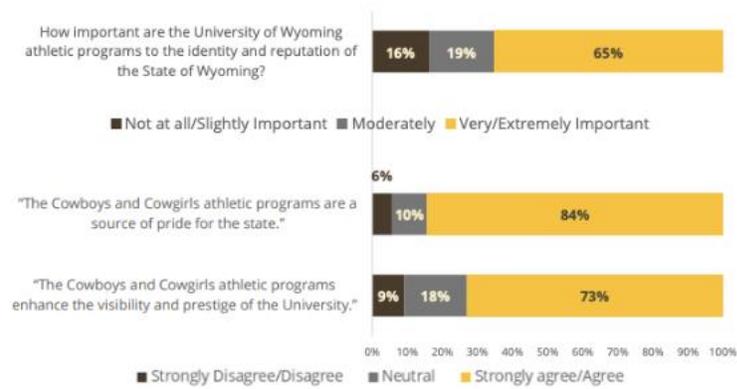
UW Athletics & State Identity

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of residents rate UW Athletics as *very* or *extremely important* to the state's identity and reputation, while only 16.2% rate it as *not at all* or *slightly important*.

A vast majority (84%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that "The Cowboys & Cowgirls athletic programs are a source of pride for Wyoming," while only 6% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

Finally, 73% of residents *agree* or *strongly agree* that "The Cowboys & Cowgirls athletic programs enhance the visibility and prestige of the University," while only 9% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

Figure 4



"The biggest benefit of the Wyoming Cowboys and Cowgirls athletic programs to the state and local community is that they bring people together and generate pride, unity, and visibility for Wyoming. Because the University of Wyoming is the state's only NCAA Division I school, its teams serve as a central rallying point for residents, fostering state identity and school spirit."

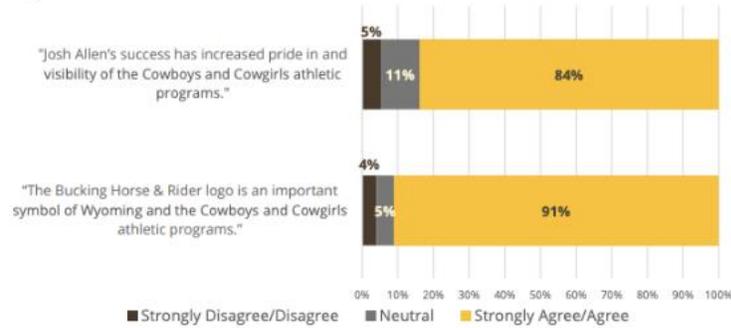
-Laramie County Resident

Branding

Former UW football quarterback Josh Allen has become an effective statewide ambassador, according to Wyoming residents. A vast majority (84%) of residents *agree* or *strongly agree* that “Josh Allen’s success has increased pride in and visibility of the Cowboys and Cowgirls athletic programs,” with a 61% saying they *strongly agree*.

When considering the Bucking Horse & Rider logo, an overwhelming majority of residents (91%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that “The Bucking Horse & Rider logo is an important symbol of Wyoming and the Cowboys and Cowgirls athletic programs.” Additionally, a majority (81%) of residents indicate they own Bucking Horse & Rider apparel or merchandise (e.g., shirts, hats, flags, car decals), while 48% say they own sport-specific apparel like football jerseys, rodeo gear, etc.

Figure 5



"The program, its logo, and its traditional history are ingrained in the culture of Wyoming. People throughout the state are proud of the team because it represents many of them. This pride across the state gives a feeling of unity and brings the vast state together."
 - Natrona County Resident

"Seeing a player that once wore Wyoming across their chest make it big, like Josh Allen, isn't just a highlight reel moment—it's proof that a dream can start right here in our small towns."
 - Laramie County Resident

Funding & Investment

A common theme among responses to the questions related to funding and investment in the athletic program at UW was a high level of *neutral* responses when asked for agreement or support on the items presented. This is likely indicative of both an information gap (many residents may not fully understand how UW Athletics is funded or how investments translate into benefits for the state), and a general lack of strong opinions or knowledge on the topic (respondents may not feel sufficiently informed or not familiar with the financial structure of collegiate athletics to take a definitive stance on athletic funding questions). Across nearly all funding and investment items, roughly 30% of respondents indicated neutrality.

Survey respondents were provided the following background regarding the annual \$5M appropriation for matching funds from the state:

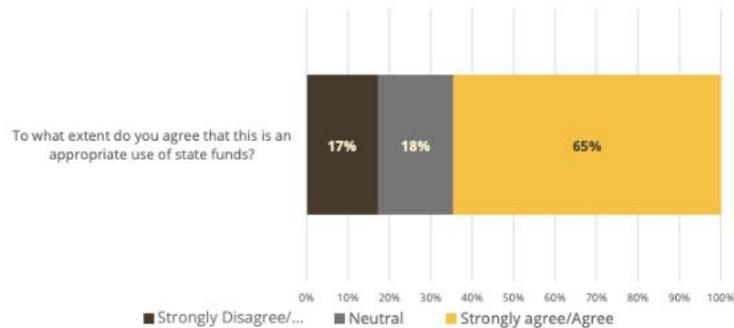
“Since 2015, UW Athletics has received a \$5M annual appropriation that is used as matching funds for donations to Cowboy Joe Club (e.g., if a donor gives \$100, the state will provide an additional \$100 to match the gift). These funds are restricted to be used only for purposes such as recruiting, team travel, nutrition, and equipment; they are not permitted to be allocated toward salaries or capital construction.”

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of residents *agree* or *strongly agree* that this is an appropriate use of state funds, while only 17% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. This results in a net agreement (*agreement* – *disagreement*) of +47 percentage points.

A plurality (46%) say they would support increasing the state appropriated funding, as defined above, if it required no increase in taxes, compared to 28% who say they would oppose an increase (+18 percentage point net support).

Figure 6

Agreement/Disagreement that matching fund appropriation is an appropriate use of funds



When asked if they would support public funding for the Cowboys and Cowgirls athletic programs if the investment is expected to produce economic benefits (e.g., tourism, jobs, increased business), 59% support, while 13% oppose (+47 percentage point net support).

When asked how strongly they support or oppose the use of state-appropriated funds to support the University of Wyoming Cowboys and/or Cowgirls athletic programs, a majority (54%) say they *support or strongly support*, while 17% say they *oppose or strongly oppose* (+36 percentage point net support).

When asked if they support or oppose a state-funded matching program to help renovate/build new Cowboys and Cowgirls facilities (with private donors contributing the rest), a majority (52%) indicate they support this, while 19% say they oppose (+33 percentage point net support).

Figure 8

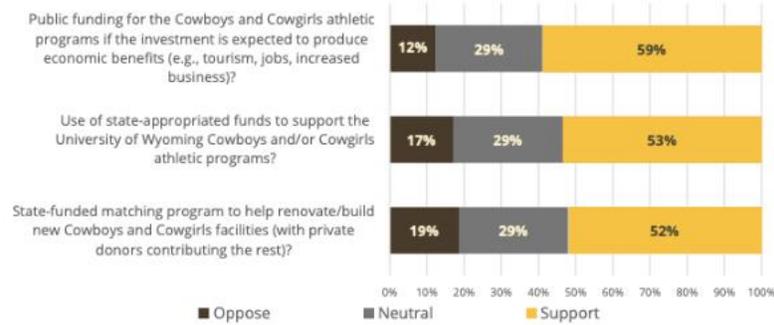
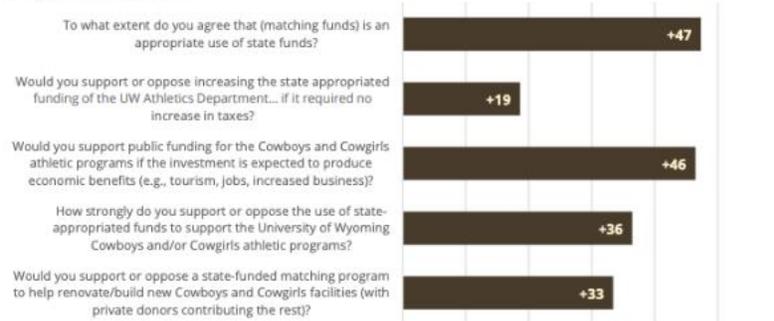


Figure 7

NET Agreement/Support for Funding & Investment Items (Agreement/Support minus Disagreement/Opposition)



Addendum E – Laramie Reporter Article on Wyoming’s Joint Appropriations Committee Recommendations on University of Wyoming Budget Requests

Athletics director says Division I competitiveness is on the line in wake of House settlement

UW Athletics Director Tom Burman spoke at length about the \$3 million per year UW is requesting for UW Cowboys football and other sports.

He said the university’s athletics budget totals about \$53 million per year — \$11 million from UW’s block grant, \$5 million from the Cowboy Joe Club, and more than \$36 million from self-generated funds like “ticket revenue, donations, corporate sponsorship, media rights, NCAA revenues, Mountain West revenues [and] licensing.”

But Burman described the “precarious” position his department is in, given inflation, competition for recruitment, and other factors driving up what it costs to fund winning Division I teams.



The first Wyoming Cowboys home game of the 2022 season (against the University of Tulsa Golden Hurricane) at War Memorial Stadium. // Photo: Tony Webster

That includes the House v. NCAA settlement, which allows college athletes to be paid but has other effects as well.

“We lost \$550,000 a year that the NCAA was providing to the University of Wyoming annually,” Burman said. “We have what I call unfunded mandates that were created at the same time as the House settlement — that we have to provide medical care for student athletes two years post eligibility, plus scholarship two years post eligibility. There’s an additional cost of that somewhere in the neighborhood of \$300,000 to \$350,000 annually.”

Burman said UW Athletics could soon have to make “very difficult decisions” and even “draconian cuts, which may include sport elimination, scholarship elimination [and] staffing reductions” — cuts that could in turn lead to a decline in ticket sales, media partnerships and more.

“I ask for your consideration in a time when you are talking about reducing government,” Burman said. “I am afraid if we take that approach in athletics, it will lead us down a road that could force Wyoming to decide if it wants a Division I program or wants to compete against Chadron State College.”

Burman pointed to surveys showing Wyoming “does not want that.”

Addendum F – Wyoming Athletics Economic Impact 2025 by Collegiate Consulting



What A Collegiate Athletics LLC Could Mean for the Future of College Sports

By Katie Davis

Originally published on May 16, 2025



The University of Kentucky's announcement that it is spinning off its athletic department into a limited liability company (LLC) has sparked questions across the country: What does this mean? Is this a new trend? And how will it affect college athletic departments, especially in a time when revenue sharing, NIL and IRS scrutiny are all accelerating?

While we don't know the full details of Kentucky's specific collegiate athletics LLC structure, the move is a noteworthy signal of how athletic departments might evolve to meet the growing complexity of college sports finance.

Here's a plain-language breakdown for athletics administrators on what these terms mean – and why this shift could matter for your institution.

Why Form a Collegiate Athletics LLC?

An LLC is a type of legal entity often used in the business world because it offers flexibility, liability protection and favorable tax options. For athletic departments, forming an LLC allows a university to reclassify some of its operations to a separate entity. This means:

- A collegiate athletics LLC would generally be subject to federal and state income taxes unless it qualifies as a passthrough entity (in which the profits and losses are reported on the owner's return).
- The university can isolate its commercial activities – like media rights, sponsorships, future revenue streams and revenue share payments – from its core educational mission.

This separation is sometimes referred to as "ring-fencing," a strategy to keep commercial income distinct from a nonprofit's operations. This limits risk to the overall university and reduces exposure to unrelated business income tax (UBIT) and private benefits.

What Is UBIT and Private Benefit, and Why Do They Matter?

UBIT applies when a nonprofit earns income from business activities that are not substantially related to its exempt educational or charitable mission. While college athletics have long existed in a tax-exempt gray zone, the growing commercial nature of athletics has raised questions about whether some of that income should be taxed.

Private benefit is a related concept that refers to when a tax-exempt organization uses its resources in a way that unfairly benefits private individuals or entities. This is strictly limited under IRS rules. In the context of college athletics, revenue sharing with athletes— depending on how it's structured— could raise private benefit concerns if the payments are seen as excessive or not tied to a charitable purpose.

By creating a collegiate athletics LLC to handle these more commercial (and potentially taxable) operations, a university might be able to reduce its exposure to both UBIT and private benefit scrutiny. Separating these activities can help preserve the tax-exempt status of the broader institution while still allowing it to participate in the changing landscape of college sports.

Disregarded Entity vs. Public Entity vs. Private Corporation: What's the Difference?

You may hear terms like disregarded entity, public entity or private corporation thrown around in media coverage.

- A disregarded entity is an LLC that is 100% owned by one organization (like a university) and is ignored for federal income tax purposes. The IRS treats it as part of the owner.
- A public entity usually refers to a government-owned institution, like a public university.
- A private corporation is a for-profit business not owned by the government.

Even if a public university forms a collegiate athletics LLC, the IRS might still treat it as part of the university unless it's truly operating like a for-profit business. That's why structure and operations matter.

If an LLC is not 100% owned by the university – meaning it has other owners such as private investors or third-party entities – it will not be considered a disregarded entity. In that case, it would be treated as either a partnership or a corporation for tax purposes, depending on elections made. This would increase the likelihood that the LLC's income is fully taxable and separate from the university's tax-exempt activities, and it would bring additional complexity in maintaining the university's overall nonprofit status.

Addendum H - Implications of Private Equity Investment in Collegiate Athletics Following University of Utah's \$500 Million Agreement

Wetzel: Beware, college sports, private equity has arrived



Photo by Scott Winters/Icon Sportswire



Dan Wetzel
Dec 11, 2025, 08:00 AM ET

↑ Share ♥ Like

❤️🔥👍 200

The University of Utah approved a groundbreaking private equity deal Tuesday that promised hundreds of millions of dollars for the school's athletic department, which like nearly every athletic department in the country is running an annual deficit.

This was a historic vote. The Utes need money. Otro Capital of New York, a firm that seeks investments in sports, sees an opportunity. The company is offering more than \$400 million to the school, a source told ESPN, plus Otro's operational expertise, to generate new revenue streams for the department.

Addendum I - Use of 3rd-Party LLCs by University Athletics (Clemson, Kentucky, Texas)

COLLEGES

Why schools are rolling out their own third-party LLCs

BY BEN PORTNOY
12.02.2025



—Mitch Barnhart and Kentucky rolled out Champions Blue, LLC to essentially operate as a holding company for the athletics department.
COURTESY OF KENTUCKY ATHLETICS

In case you missed it in this week's magazine, I [dove into the world of third-party LLCs](#) that seem to be popping up by the day across college athletics.

These new-look entities vary widely in scope and actual responsibilities, but the reason for rolling out such a venture is simple: Generate more revenue and create flexibility.

"What has been in college athletics is the 'external unit,'" Clemson AD Graham Neff said. "In a lot of places, that means philanthropy, [multimedia rights] management, sports information, your marketing team. ... The distinction of duties and staff under Clemson Ventures is [it's] all revenue-generating in nature."

Clemson Ventures is perhaps the first of these LLCs to take hold. The entity was born out of the school's multimedia rights deal with JMI Sports going sideways and the parties negotiating an early termination to their relationship.

Clemson created Clemson Athletics Properties (CAPCO), [evolving that into Clemson Ventures](#) -- an arm that has generated significant revenues despite operational costs.

Kentucky's [Champions Blue, LLC](#) is essentially a holding company for the school's athletic department. Texas Tech, as part of [a 10-year renewal with Learfield](#), rolled out Texas Tech Athletics Partners LLC, which will house the school's business development and Learfield Impact NIL services and staff.

"There's going to be a lot that develops [in college sports]," said Michigan State AD J Batt, who spearheaded the development of Spartan Ventures during his brief tenure. "But a lot of that's TBD. A lot of this is moving to a place where you're prepared to take on change and challenge, and this sort of an organization allows you to do that."

Don't be surprised when more of these entities continue popping up.

Addendum J – Wyoming Public Radio Article on Wyoming State Government Revenue Forecast Fiscal Year 2026-2030

Investment revenue eclipses other income streams in Wyoming, an 'all-time record'

Wyoming Public Radio | By [Chris Clements](#)
Published November 3, 2025 at 4:24 PM MST



🕒 Reading Time: 2 minutes, 27 seconds

Wyoming State Government Revenue Forecast *Fiscal Year 2026 – Fiscal Year 2030*



Screenshot Of October 2025 CREG Report

Revenue earned from investments has outpaced all other income streams in Wyoming, an "all-time record" for the state.

That's according to [an October report](#) from revenue forecasters presented to state lawmakers on the interim [Joint Appropriations Committee](#) on Oct. 30 in Cheyenne.

The report by the [Consensus Revenue Estimating Group](#) (CREG) says Wyoming's investment portfolio revenue has grown larger than even the revenue generated when minerals are taken from federal lands, monies that are then shared with the state.

"I can't overemphasize the amount of money that was generated from the savings of the state for this," said CREG co-Chair Don Richards, who noted that state Treasurer Curt Meier's office had realized \$1.86 billion in investment earnings across all funds and accounts.

The report highlighted the fact that investment earnings generated from the state's Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund (PWMTF), a fund that represents a portion of Wyoming's mineral severance tax revenue, surpassed the total sales and use taxes deposited into the general fund from any year by a "wide margin."

"This marks the first time PWMTF realized earnings have exceeded the [general fund] portion of statewide sales and use taxes," the CREG report states. "In sum, the state's fiscal performance in FY 2025 was dominated by record realized investment earnings."

However, officials also noted that revenue streams like sales and use tax and state royalties fell below what forecasters had predicted during the last fiscal year.

Forecasters also referenced the inherent volatility in investment monies and emphasized the volatility of Wyoming's income streams in general.

"Investment earnings, especially from realized capital gains, are extremely volatile," the report continues. "The outsized performance of investment earnings may not be repeated."

In addition to high investment revenue earnings, the report shows that oil, natural gas, coal and trona all ended the last fiscal year with slightly stronger production than was forecast.

"Natural gas prices outpaced CREG's January 2025 forecast and combined with higher than expected production across all minerals, more than offset slightly lower than forecast oil, coal, and trona prices," said the report.

At [a Wyoming Freedom Caucus press conference](#) after the report was presented, Rep. John Bear (R-Gillette), the chair emeritus of the caucus, said big cuts to the state budget are still necessary.

"It would be easy to say we need to cut because we just don't have the money," said Bear. "And what the CREG report shows is that right now, we have money."

But Bear said that because Wyomingites' costs have been increasing at the same time as the state is saving more money, cuts are still needed to state spending. He mentioned higher property tax rate assessments paired with a growing state savings account.

"I don't think that many families in Wyoming have been able to increase their savings by over 10%, which the state has been able to do in the last few years," he said. "What did we do when we did that? We didn't provide that tax relief. So this last year, we did provide some tax relief."

The CREG report is released by officials every October as the governor is drafting his budget proposal, with a revised report out every January. Gov. Mark Gordon's budget proposal is expected to be made public on or before Nov. 17.

This reporting was made possible by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, supporting state government coverage in the state. Wyoming Public Media and Jackson Hole Community Radio are partnering to cover state issues both on air and online.

Addendum K – Summary of Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon’s Submitted Budget

WYOMING

Budget Cycle

Biennial

Fiscal Year Begins

July 1

Governor Submits Budget

November (3rd Monday)

Governor Signs Budget

March

Proposed Budget - Fiscal Years 2027-2028

On November 17, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon submitted a biennial budget for fiscal 2027 and fiscal 2028. The budget calls for \$11.13 billion in spending from all funds over the next biennium; this includes \$3.35 billion in appropriations from the general fund (GF) and budget reserve account (BRA) and \$2.59 billion from federal sources. The spending plan is based on ongoing general fund revenues estimated at \$3.74 billion and the budget reserve account estimated at \$238 million. Total GF/BRA resources are estimated at \$4.14 billion. The budget holds \$193 million (5 percent of general fund revenue) in the general fund Statutory Reserve. The Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (LSRA), the state’s rainy day fund, has a projected balance of \$1.38 billion at the end of the next biennium. The budget calls for \$2.7 billion in spending from the School Foundation Program, leaving an ending balance of \$132 million, and \$624 million from the Strategic Investment and Projects Account (SIPA), leaving an ending balance of \$80 million.

Addendum L – University of South Carolina Approves 300% Increase to Mandatory Student Athletics Fee Following NCAA Settlement

USC GAMECOCKS FOOTBALL

South Carolina approves new athletics fee for students. Here's what we know

By Jordan Kaye

Updated July 1, 2025 2:07 PM |  Gift Article



South Carolina's student section The Cockpit during a game against at Williams-Brice Stadium.
dmclmore@thestate.com

 Listen to this article

As South Carolina's athletic department looks for new revenue streams in the wake of the House settlement, USC students will now foot a larger bill.

For years, South Carolina has offered an \$52 athletics fee per semester for full-time students (\$104 annually) — and an optional \$86 per semester fee (\$172 annually) for part-time students — that allowed those enrolled at USC to attend every Gamecock sporting event. Granted, students had to enter a lottery for the chance to attend football games.

Those benefits will all remain. Now a new “athletics auxiliary fee” of \$300 annually is being added for students, and it's on top of the \$104 fee that's already in place, a USC spokesman confirmed to The State.

“Access to world-class athletic events is one of the many reasons students are attracted to USC,” athletic director Jeremiah Donati said in a statement Friday. “In order to stay competitive in an evolving collegiate landscape, we have to create environments where students can have a great fan experience while cheering on the Gamecocks.”

When accounting for the fact that South Carolina had around 38,300 students enrolled during the fall 2024 semester, a \$300 athletics auxiliary fee would generate nearly \$11.5 million in new revenue.

As a refresher: [Because of a recently signed settlement](#), all schools are now allowed to share revenue with their student-athletes, up to \$20.5 million next year.

According to South Carolina's Friday news release that announced the university's newly approved budget, the additional student-fee revenue will not go toward the 50-plus athlete scholarships USC plans to add next year or toward [the upcoming Williams-Brice Stadium renovations](#). It also won't be used for any of South Carolina's House settlement payouts, the school says.

So what exactly is the new \$300 fee going toward? South Carolina says it will "continue student access to athletics events/ticket lottery, address increased event/program operating costs, and enhance the student experience across multiple USC sporting venues. Enhancements will include student centered in-game activity and promotions, facility upgrades and additional support for health/safety staffing at athletics events."

South Carolina is not alone in upping its student athletics fees.

Last year, [Clemson also announced a mandatory \\$300 athletics fee](#) despite never having such a fee in the past. Florida charges an athletics fee of [around \\$2 per credit hour](#). As of 2024, Georgia charged \$53 per semester.

Clemson's new student fee will be used "solely for athletic operations expenses directly associated with student-athlete services and student experience," athletic director Graham Neff said.

This story was originally published June 20, 2025 at 4:29 PM.

Addendum M – Cardinal News Article on Rising Mandatory Student Fees to Subsidize Intercollegiate Athletics Programs

Former college president: Why must students be forced to subsidize college sports? Rising mandatory fees should get attention.

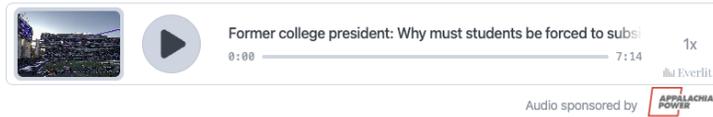
Increasingly, intercollegiate athletics are driven by financial rather than academic considerations.



by James Koch
November 19, 2025



James Madison University football. Courtesy of JustinLP93.



I am a huge sports fan who this past week watched both the Old Dominion University men and women play basketball. Earlier in life, I attended at least one St. Louis Cardinal baseball game 49 years in a row. I note these things because I do not want to be interpreted as just another academic who is anti-intercollegiate athletics.

But being a fan has not blinded me to what has been going on in intercollegiate athletics in the United States. Increasingly, intercollegiate athletics are driven by financial rather than academic considerations. A high school lineman in Texas signed a \$5+ million deal with Texas Tech, and the University of Texas Austin's now famous quarterback (Arch Manning) has an agreement with that university that is reputed to be worth \$6 million to him. LSU may owe \$47 million to the head football coach it just fired, while Texas A&M's 2023 cashing in of its head coach reportedly may cost that institution as much as \$76 million.

Within Virginia, James Madison University this year is assessing each of its full-time undergraduates a mandatory athletic fee that exceeds \$3,000 (this translates to about \$100 per credit hour!). Old Dominion University's version of this fee costs its undergraduates \$2,127 annually, while William and Mary's fee is \$2,401. For these and similar data, see the State Council of Higher Education for [Virginia's 2025-26 Tuition and Fees Report](#).

Virginia Tech recently received considerable publicity when its board of visitors adopted a plan that will see Tech plug almost a quarter of a billion dollars into its intercollegiate athletics programs over four years. One member of Tech's board voted against this proposal.

Is there any evidence that students benefit from such expenditures? For example, can we point to benefits realized by Longwood University undergraduate students who this academic year must pay a mandatory \$3,083 athletics fee? Longwood does not field a football team, so the focus on that campus is on its men's and women's basketball teams. The NCAA reported an average attendance of 2,086 fans at Longwood home men's games in 2024-25, while the Longwood women basketballers averaged 1,115 fans at their home contests. Longwood's headcount enrollment exceeds 4,000, and some in attendance at its games are not students. Ticket sales for all Longwood athletic events totaled a bit more than \$115,000 in 2024, a paltry sum when compared to the \$8.18 million that the University earned from its mandatory athletic fee. (These financial data come from the Knight-Newhouse database on intercollegiate athletics ([Custom Reports | College Athletics Database](#).)

James Madison and Old Dominion, both of whom are relatively recent entrants into the "big-time" Football Bowl Division (FBS) category, earn much more from their mandatory student athletic fees than other Virginia institutions. In FY 2024, Knight-Newhouse reports that JMU garnered \$55.53 million from its fee, while ODU earned \$32.39 million. Those are not trivial sums and are among the very highest in the nation. No wonder both institutions field winning football teams.

These fees exist despite the reality that on most campuses, students vote with their feet, and data show that most students on most campuses choose not to attend any of their institutions' athletic events. Nevertheless, they are forced to pay for those events anyway.

Well, more than 90% of all intercollegiate athletic programs lose money and therefore must be subsidized, and often this occurs outside of the public eye. Interested readers should go to the Knight-Newhouse database on intercollegiate athletics ([Custom Reports | College Athletics Database](#)) to find relevant data on a particular institution's athletics financing. This report, for example, reveals that Longwood's athletic programs received \$6.69 million in "institutional/government support" in addition to the student fee revenue. I can be convinced otherwise, but this \$6.69 million appears to be a subsidy to those programs. However, Longwood isn't the Lone Ranger here. Similar subsidization exists on nearly every Virginia campus — George Mason University's comparable support number was \$5.8 million, while Virginia Commonwealth University's was \$6.72 million.

Do athletic programs make degrees more valuable and this justifies fees and subsidies? Unfortunately, the answer is no. I am a co-author of a recently published book, “The Economic Impact of Intercollegiate Athletics on Former Students: Unfulfilled Promises” (Palgrave MacMillan). In this book, we examined 699 colleges over the period 2004–2022 and found no evidence that the typical institution’s students realize any economic benefits from their *alma mater’s* athletic programs after they graduate. Indeed, for the typical student, the evidence tells us that attending college athletic events is analogous to a person drinking a can of diet cola. The cola may taste good and hit the spot, but once consumed, it has no further impact on the drinker. Here today, gone tomorrow. But note this — students can freely choose not to buy a can of diet cola; however, they do not enjoy a similar choice with respect to how their campus’s intercollegiate athletic programs are funded.

The commonwealth of Virginia is notable for the quality of the higher education provided on its campuses, public and independent. But one need not be Bob Dylan to recognize that the times are changing. Given current trends, it is time for members of governing boards, governors, legislators, donors, parents, students and the media to ask how and where expensive intercollegiate athletics programs will maintain or improve Virginia’s higher education position in the future. Governor-elect Abigail Spanberger should not ignore this need.

James Koch is president emeritus of Old Dominion University.

Addendum N – James Madison’s Mandatory Student Athletic Fees Reach Over \$3000

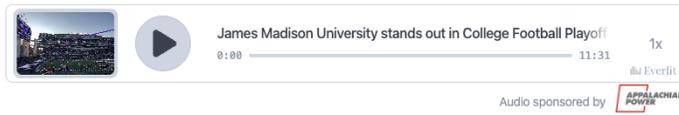
James Madison University stands out in College Football Playoff field. Its mandatory student fee for athletics is more than 4 times higher than all the other schools put together.

Virginia allows public colleges to charge a mandatory student fee to support intercollegiate athletics. JMU's rate of \$3,036 per year is higher than all but two other schools in the state. JMU is an outlier not just in Virginia, but in the nation.

 by **Dwayne Yancey**
December 15, 2025



James Madison University football. Courtesy of JustinLP93.



Got something to say about this column? [You can weigh in here.](#)

After the NCAA announced the 12 teams that made this year's College Football Playoff, a friend messaged me: "So how does it feel to be an alumnus of a football powerhouse?"

My alma mater, James Madison University, snuck in as the No. 12 seed — the only Virginia team to make the field.

The way JMU made the cut is somewhat controversial, although that controversy has little to nothing to do with the Harrisonburg school and everything to do with the convoluted nature of college football.

The top 10 teams as [ranked by the CFP selection committee](#) made it in, but numbers 11–19 did not. Instead, Tulane (ranked 20th) and James Madison (ranked 24th) did. Why? Rules, complicated rules meant to acknowledge the winners of lesser conferences such as the American Conference (won by Tulane) and the Sun Belt (JMU). That means No. 11 Notre Dame, which might be a better team than many of the ones that did get a bid, stays at home.

If all that matters to you, well, you probably know all that already because it's been all over sports talk shows. Maybe the CFP rules are dumb. Maybe Notre Dame is greedy, because it insists on remaining an independent, which puts it at a disadvantage under these selection rules. Like I said, tune into sports talk radio and they're probably still arguing about all this.

All we need to know for our purposes today is that JMU is in — and that this column has very little to do with sports.

JMU stands out from this playoff bracket of 12 in several ways.

It's not because the school is named after a person — Tulane is, as well.

It's not the youngest school in the field, either. Texas Tech was established in 1923, a full 15 years after The State Normal and Industrial School for Women opened in Harrisonburg in 1908.

JMU is unusual because it's the only one of the 12 schools that began as a women's college.

It's the only one whose nickname comes from a person's name — the Dukes are named after former president Samuel Duke. (After all, James Madison didn't think much of the dukes of British royalty.)

JMU is also the only school in the final 12 that has purple and gold as its colors.

But that's not why we're here today.

What really makes JMU stand out is this: It has the highest mandatory student fee for intercollegiate athletics of any of these 12 schools.

Some of the schools don't have any. When I started researching this, the media relations department at the University of Alabama asked me what in the world I was talking about — Alabama doesn't have such a thing. I had to explain how Virginia colleges work — and how out-of-line JMU is even within Virginia.

Let's sketch this out the way a coach might diagram a trick play.

If you attend a public college in Virginia, you have to pay tuition (unless you're blessed with a full-ride scholarship) as well as certain "mandatory fees."

These vary from school to school. They generally cover parking, student health services and intramural sports. They always include “student union and recreational fees.” And they always include something else: mandatory fees for intercollegiate athletics. You can see the full list here:

Inst	2025-26 Non-E&G Mandatory Fees by Category										Total
	113	80900	80920	80940	80950	80960	80970	80980	80990	80995	
	Unique Military Activities	Higher Education Auxiliary Enterprises	Bookstores & Other Stores	Parking & Transportation Systems and Services	Telecommunications Systems and Services	Student Health Services	Student Unions & Recreational Facilities	Recreational & Intramural Facilities	Other Enterprise Functions	Intercollegiate Athletics	
GMU				\$187		\$168	\$285	\$343	\$2,107	\$812	\$3,922
ODU				\$126		\$340	\$523		\$1,950	\$2,305	\$5,244
IVA			\$10	\$278		\$1,147	\$416	\$610	\$44	\$786	\$3,291
VCU				\$37		\$268	\$1,012	\$283	\$214	\$1,391	\$3,205
VT				\$276	\$216	\$670	\$562	\$413	\$1	\$732	\$2,870
WM				\$91	\$408	\$866	\$2,292	\$440	\$543	\$2,409	\$7,049
CNU							\$1,654	\$53	\$2,223	\$2,872	\$6,802
UVAW						\$204	\$1,238	\$59	\$1,053	\$2,877	\$5,432
JMU				\$217		\$346	\$599	\$791	\$999	\$3,036	\$5,988
LU					\$159	\$662	\$718	\$414	\$2,131	\$3,206	\$7,290
UMW		\$425		\$70	\$596	\$283	\$1,184	\$793	\$1,062	\$1,545	\$5,958
NSU				\$74	\$12	\$150	\$1,156	\$436	\$440	\$1,980	\$4,228
RU				\$102		\$403	\$1,053	\$170	\$641	\$1,785	\$4,134
VMI	\$2,758		\$842			\$610	\$2,602			\$4,186	\$10,998
YSU				\$45		\$456	\$550		\$1,206	\$1,515	\$3,772
RBC				\$206	\$274		\$379		\$754	\$789	\$2,402
VCCS									\$14		\$14
Avg All Inst	\$2,758	\$218	\$842	\$142	\$241	\$470	\$1,014	\$400	\$961	\$2,012	\$4,859

Mandatory fees for the 2025–26 academic year at state-supported colleges. Courtesy of State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Maybe you never need to use the student health system, but the theory for charging a mandatory fee is that every student might need it at some point. I’m not going to quibble over intramural sports, which some students may never play, and go straight to that line for intercollegiate athletics — which only a relative handful of students are ever going to play. While in theory any student could “walk on” to the team, the reality is that’s almost impossible. When I was at JMU back in the dark ages, I played on an intramural softball team simply by virtue of signing up — nobody asked if I could hit or field (and my subsequent lack of a professional sports career suggests I couldn’t). However, there was no way I was going to be allowed to play on one of the official teams, but we all had to pay for them anyway.

I call your attention to several things on this chart. You can skip the bottom two lines, which are two-year schools, Richard Bland College and the Virginia Community College System. At all but two of the four-year schools — George Mason and the University of Virginia are the exceptions — the mandatory fee for intercollegiate athletics is the highest of any fee.

At all but three — those two plus Virginia Tech — that mandatory fee is more than \$1,000 per year. That will drop to two over the next few years; this fall, the Virginia Tech board of visitors voted 12-1 to raise the fee to help generate more money for athletics. (This was a board whose members are all appointed by Gov. Glenn Youngkin, so this is a striking example of Republican appointees voting for what amounts to a tax increase.)

At six schools, the mandatory fee tops \$2,000 per year. At three, it tops \$3,000. At one (Virginia Military Institute), it tops \$4,000.

Addendum O – University of New Mexico Increases Student Athletics Fees

NEWS

UNM increases student fees to strengthen Lobo Athletics

Shin Thant-Hlaing
June 2, 2025 | 12:48am MDT



On May 20, the University of New Mexico Board of Regents approved a \$45 increase in student fees per semester next year and an additional \$60, totaling \$105 per semester for undergraduates in two years, to fund UNM Athletics for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years.

The fee increase is expected to address the athletics funding gaps between UNM and peer universities in the Mountain West Conference, according to a [Board of Regents meeting summary document](#).

There is a \$15 million gap between UNM and the average athletic budgets of other universities participating in the Mountain West and Pac-12, according to a presentation by UNM Athletics included within the document.

In addition to the increased student fees, the UNM athletic department was allocated \$11.5 million from the state legislature. This constitutes a \$3.1 million increase from the \$8.4 million allotment in 2024.

The increased student fees will help fund UNM Olympic sports that have been underfunded, Fernando Lovo, UNM Director of Athletics said.

"We've seen inflationary costs for nutrition, athletic training support, mental health support and then just the general cost of a scholarship. We have not matched those costs financially over the last three or four years," Lovo said.

Student fees fund mental health services for student athletics, according to the document.

"Student athletes are driving in vans back from Las Vegas. That's a long drive and student athletes are missing classes and exhausted when they show up. Our ability to protect their mental health and keep them competing at the highest level depends on these investments," Lovo said.

Thant Htet Oo, a UNM student and a videographer for Lobo Athletics, believes this investment is important because having a "winning school" attracts more students, he said.

"Academics are important. But to get more funding for different academic programs we need more students. And what do students look for? They love coming to a winning school," Htet Oo said.

UNM will get more NIL deals and "keep our school a winning school" if the university keeps its talented athletes, Htet Oo said.

Megan Gayle Santos, a UNM student, is concerned that the increase in student fees is too steep, she said.

"A slower increase would have been more mindful of the students," Santos said.

UNM Athletics originally proposed a student fee increase of \$60 dollars next year, and an additional \$60 the following year, an additional \$15 more per semester than the approved plan, according to the document.

"An additional investment in athletics is not something every student benefits from, because not everyone uses the services that UNM athletics provides," Santos said. "I can pay for it, but there are other things I'd rather pay for."

Santos was also concerned about students from marginalized communities, for whom a student fee increase could be far more significant, Santos said.

"Not everyone is eligible for the lottery or opportunity scholarship," Santos said.

The "additional burden" of increased student fees for athletics should not be placed on students, Santos said.

Student fees should go towards a more diverse array of causes supporting students from minority backgrounds during a particularly tense political climate, Santos said.

Although UNM athletics is not the most important part of UNM, it is the most visible, Lovo said.

"We've seen an incredible amount of growth in our self-generated revenues. This year we broke \$4 million in ticket revenue for basketball for the first time. We've set records in fundraising every year. But it's going to take all of us to ensure that we're funding athletics to the level where we can keep New Mexicans proud," Lovo said.

SDSU proposes student fee increase for athletic programs

By [Jacob Aere](#) / General Assignment Reporter

Published December 5, 2025 at 12:07 PM PST

Updated December 8, 2025 at 10:30 AM PST



San Diego State University leaders are proposing to increase athletic program funding by raising the fees students pay each semester.

In October, the university introduced a plan to increase the mandatory Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) fee [from \\$290 a semester to \\$420](#) starting in fall 2026.

The [majority of the fee increase](#) would go toward repairs and maintenance of shared athletics facilities and student athlete well-being, according to SDSU. Another 20% of the fee would fund club sports, student spirit enhancements and student employment opportunities.

The school's Campus Fee Advisory Committee (CFAC) held a series of campus forums to present arguments in favor and against the proposal and solicit student feedback in October and November. The committee is made up of students, faculty and staff. SDSU's Budget & Finance director is the committee chair.

On Friday, the committee will make a recommendation on the fee increase to SDSU President Adela de la Torre, who will issue the final decision.

KPBS reached out to multiple student committee members but an SDSU media relations officer declined interviews due to their involvement in the process.

The fee would help establish a more stable and predictable source of funding for student-athletes and those involved in club sports that is not tied to fluctuations in state budget allocations, an SDSU spokesperson said in a statement.

"As the costs to support student scholarships, on campus facilities and student-athlete support have increased, the current IRA fee has made up a smaller and smaller part of the overall athletics budget, dropping from 30% of overall athletic revenue a decade ago, to just 13% of athletic revenue currently," the SDSU statement said.

The fee increase will not be used for costs associated with Snapdragon Stadium, commercial marketing deals made by student athletes, or for SDSU's move to the Pac-12 Conference, according to SDSU.

SDSU's student newspaper, [The Daily Aztec](#), spoke to students who are frustrated with the lack of a vote on the fee.

"I am an out-of-state student, and given that tuition increases every year, adding a fee I'd pay every year for that has no impact on my education makes the strain feel even more overwhelming," Arwen Handel, a second-year human geography major, told The Daily Aztec.

If it isn't [approved](#), the school's webpage on the proposed fee says "the university will face significant challenges in sustaining and enhancing the athletics experience for students and student-athletes."