University of Kentucky

Effects of COVID-19 on Sports Program Offerings at NCAA Division I Institutions

Martin School of Public Policy and Administration

Jason M. Schlafer
4-30-2021
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Executive Summary

In the past 40 years, the cost of operating a competitive college athletics department that competes for an institution within a Power Five conference the highest level of intercollegiate competition has risen drastically. Concurrently, opportunities to compete at the highest level have expanded, especially for women who now outnumber men in Division I athletics competition. As COVID-19 constrained revenue, five institutions from Power Five conferences have discontinued 23 sports programs to date. This paper addresses how decision makers determine which sports programs to eliminate and offers recommendations on how to prevent the elimination of opportunities to compete in intercollegiate athletics.

Introduction

All intercollegiate sports programs at American four-year colleges and universities are governed by two, member-led organizations—the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The NCAA is the larger of the two organizations when measured by any standard including:

1) the quantity of its members,

2) the amount of revenue both at the institution and association levels,

3) the size of the institutions that elect to be members, and

4) the number of student athletes that participate on teams under its jurisdiction.
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The NCAA consists of 1,098 member institutions, 350 of which participate in the highest of the NCAA’s three divisions, Division I. Nearly every school aligns with one of 102 athletic conferences for competition. Exceptions in this category are known as “independents.” In all, the 176,000 students represent their school in intercollegiate competition under the NCAA flag.

NCAA Division I athletics is further divided formally into two subdivisions: 1) institutions competing in the Football Championship Subdivision (a twenty-four-team playoff tournament from which the winner is crowned NCAA Division I National Champion) and 2) Bowl Championship Subdivision from which institutions play one another in post season bowl games and the College Football Playoff (a four-team playoff from which the more prestigious, CFP National Champion is crowned).

In addition to these formal distinctions, there is another formal division between the Football Bowl Subdivision conferences. The two categories include the Power Five Conferences
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(composed of institutions of the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big Twelve Conference, Pacific Twelve Conference, and the Southeastern Conference) and the Group of Five (American Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, and Sun Belt Conference) from the Bowl Championship Subdivision. These distinctions are primarily a result of differences in revenues earned by conference media rights. The ten conferences, as well as a couple of institutions that are not affiliated with a conference, earn more revenue from conference media rights and institutional ticket sales, thus have higher budgets.

The NCAA hosts 90 distinct championships and crowns 90 different teams to be “NCAA Division I National Champion” at the Division I level each academic year in sports. These range in profile from water polo and fencing, to football and basketball.

The Power Five

In August 2014, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors (the policy making oversight of NCAA Division I athletics) formalized a policy that affords institutions affiliated with a Power Five conference to come together to pass rules specific to their Power Five conference member peers. Prior to this separation, it was difficult for Power Five conference to get legislation passed in institutions when the new legislation would cause additional expense to the institutions. This was due to the constrained resources of the other institutions and the fact that there are more institutions outside the Power Five conferences than within the group of Power Five conference.

This new group, formally known as the Autonomy Five (synonymous with “A5” and “Power Five”), was designed to permit similarly situated athletics departments to provide
benefits to student athletes within their institutions that would be unlikely to have the support of leaders from institutions with smaller athletics budgets.\textsuperscript{1}

The most noticeable rules change made under the relatively new authority of the Autonomy Five was an increase in the limits in aid available to student athletes who are granted scholarships. Previously, a full grant-in-aid or full scholarship provided to a student athlete included only full tuition, fees, room and board, and books. Due to a change made by the Autonomy Five, a full scholarship at an A5 institution may include the full “cost of attendance”—an amount that exceeds the previous limit and includes transportation expenses and other incidental expenses. At most institutions, this is an additional benefit to a student athlete with a full scholarship of nearly $5,000 per year.

As an example, the University of Iowa which has recently dropped three sports citing financial issues, offers full cost of attendance to student athletes on full scholarship and a proportionate amount to student athletes on partial scholarships. While scholarship athletes in football, basketball, and some other sports receive full scholarships that are known as a “full grant-in-aid,” all of the sports that have been cut in the past year are “equivalency” sports. Equivalency sports spread a maximum number of scholarships across the entire team. As an example, according to their public filings with the NCAA, the University of Iowa’s athletics department issues 303.46 full grants-in-aid spread across 476 student-athletes. In addition to those 303.46 full scholarships paying the students’ tuition, fees, and room and board, athletes receive payments for the full cost of attendance to be spent at the students’ discretion.
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At Iowa, these cost of attendance payments are $4,636 per scholarship and result in an annual expense to the athletics department of $1,406,840. Since the separation of the Power 5 and the subsequent alteration of the rules permitting institutions within the Power 5 conferences to pay student-athletes for full cost-of-attendance, the cost of a full scholarship at Iowa has an increased cost of 20.34% for out of state students and 10.13% more for in-state scholarships over the cost of a full scholarship prior to the rule change.

### Revenue and Expenses Related to NCAA Division I Athletics

According to the NCAA, the total athletics revenue reported among all athletics departments in 2019 was $18.9 billion. Of that amount, approximately $10.6 billion (56% of the total) was revenue generated by athletics-related activities, leaving nearly $8.3 billion (44% of the total) to be subsidized by other sources. The sources of these subsidies include appropriations by institutions to their athletics department, off-sets of various athletics-related

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iowa Athletics</th>
<th>Scholarship Expenses Power 5 Autonomy</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In State</td>
<td>Out of State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>$ 9,830</td>
<td>$ 31,793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room and Board</td>
<td>$11,780</td>
<td>$11,780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>$21,810</td>
<td>$43,773</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cost of Attendance Payment per Full Scholarship |   |   |
| Academic Supplies | $750 | $750 |
| Personal Expenses | $2,926 | $2,926 |
| Transportation | $760 | $760 |
| Sub Total Cost of Attendance Portion | $4,436 | $4,436 |
| Total Cost of Full Athletic Scholarship | $26,246 | $48,209 |

Source: [https://admissions.uiowa.edu/finances/estimated-costs-attendance](https://admissions.uiowa.edu/finances/estimated-costs-attendance)

| Number of Full Scholarship Equivalencies at Iowa | 303.46 |
| Amount of Incremental Expense due to new rule | $1,346,149 |
| Percentage increase in scholarship expense | 20.34% | 10.13% |
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costs by universities, and direct student fees.\(^2\) Of the $10.6 billion generated by the 1,102 members from athletics-related activities, $8.3 billion (more than 78% of the total revenue) was generated by institutions that are members of a Power Five Conference. Sliced differently, fewer than 6% of the institutions generate 78% of the revenue.\(^3\)

**Participation in College Sports Over Past 40 Years**

Over the past forty years, the number of students participating in NCAA Division I athletics has nearly doubled.\(^4\) The addition of new sports programs has primarily increased opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics for women. Further, as revenues have increased over that time period due to revenue created by football and men’s basketball programs, the number of men’s and women’s sports programs offered at top public institutions has increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Male</th>
<th>% Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2,778</td>
<td>1,767</td>
<td>4,545</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>2,262</td>
<td>5,001</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,878</td>
<td>3,030</td>
<td>5,908</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td>3,411</td>
<td>6,301</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2,989</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>6,661</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change since 1982 | 7.60% | 107.81% |

While opportunities to participate in Division I athletics have increased nearly 47% since 1982, revenues and expenditures at public universities in Power Five conferences has grown a whopping 83.2% since just 2004.\(^5\) This rapid growth, due primarily to television revenues, has contributed to market-driven, unsustainable increases in the salaries of football and men's basketball coaches as expenditures on extravagant football and basketball facilities which are
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built with recruiting the next generation of athletes in mind. In short, it has become more expensive to earn revenue.

Research Question and Design

Since COVID-19 began impacting college athletics in March of 2020, some institutions within Power Five conferences have discontinued sports programs. In fact, all five of the Power Five institutions that have cut a sport during the pandemic have cut more than one. To date, 23 sports programs have been cut from five different Power Five institutions.

Given the recent trends in college athletics and the additional jolt to the system due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project will work to answer the following research questions (and by exploring many of the sub-questions).

1. What factors determine whether to cut sports programs?
2. How do universities use these factors to determine which sports programs to cut?

The issue can be compartmentalized into three distinct categories that are often cited as factors leading to the decision to eliminate a sports program.

Development of Athletes Toward the Olympic Games and Competitive Excellence

For the most recent Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2016, the United States Olympic team consisted of 561 athletes who competed in 31 different sports. Of those 561 athletes, 313 trained and competed at Power 5 institutions—nearly 56% of this total. This raises the following question: Does
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successfully preparing students to compete in Olympic games impact the decision about which sport/sports to eliminate?

Dollars

Given the documented revenue trends among programs that compete in Power Five conferences, the following questions arise: 1) What is the actual cost savings of eliminating a sports program considering that athletes on Power 5 teams are likely to choose a different higher education experience (or none at all) if the sport in which they compete is not offered at their institution? 2) Does the financial impact on the whole institution influence whether an athletics department cuts a sport?

Demographics

Opportunities for women to compete in Division I athletics have increased by 107.81% over the past forty years. Due to this progress, more women compete in Division I athletics than men. 1) What impact has the elimination of Power Five sports programs had on opportunities for women to compete in Division I athletics? 2) What impact has the elimination of these programs had on each institution’s compliance with Title IX? 3) Does gender factor into the decision on which sport or sports to cut?

Using interview-based qualitative analysis as a foundation, this research draws on the concepts of the Martin School’s Masters of Public Financial Management program by aggregating the quantitative data (athletics department budgets and number of sports programs sponsored)
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of publicly funding institutions and comparing the data to the principles for decision-making discovered through interviews.

In addition to information that is publicly available including public filings required by the National Collegiate Athletics Association, password-protected data housed by “Winthrop Intelligence” (an intercollegiate athletics industry-focused service), and other literature, interviews with an athletics director from one institution in each of the Power 5 conferences, and a representative of a NCAA Division I FCS institution were interviewed. These interviews, which were conducted in March 2021, focused on the how the decision to keep, drop, or add sports programs is made.

Literature Review

Title IX Background

On November 8, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Higher Education Act of 1965 into law. The aim of the law was to strengthen the educational resources of public colleges and universities. Then on June 23, 1972, President Richard M. Nixon’s signature amended that Act when the Education Amendments of 1972 became law with his signature.

The 1972 Amendment provided financial aid directly to students and, most notably, created Title IX which codified a prohibition on discrimination on the basis of gender in educational institutions that receive federal aid. The Act does not mention participation in sports and certainly does not reference intercollegiate athletics. Instead, through administrative interpretations of the Act by the United States Department of Education and its Office of Civil Rights, gender equity in athletics under Title IX contributed to increased participation in athletics.
by women. Further, President Nixon’s signing statement focuses on busing as a tactic toward better integrating public schools rather than focusing on the gender equity aspects of the Act.\textsuperscript{7}

While there is no mention of women participating in sports as part of Title IX, the Act has been leveraged to increase female participation in sports at the college level by 544.6\% since 1972. During that same period, participation in men’s sports at the college level increased by 50.4\%, debunking the notion that Title IX has diminished opportunities for men. In fact, prior to the passage of Title IX, less than 1\% of expenditures on college sports by public universities were spent on women’s athletics. Prior to the law’s passage, men participating in intercollegiate competition outnumbered women 12.5:1.\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Male and Female Participation in College Sports, 1972–2011}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Revenue Trends in Power Five Conferences}

As revenues have increased within the five highest revenue-producing conferences (the Power Five), the institutions within those conferences have generally reinvested that revenue in the two sports that produce the revenue—football and men’s basketball. In fact, schools reinvest
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a full 16% of their revenues in salaries for coaches (Source: U.S. Department of Education. Equity in Athletics Data Analysis).

According to research conducted by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, the 65 institutions that comprise the institutions of the Atlantic Coast Conference, The Big Ten, The Big XII, the Pac-12 and the Southeastern Conference have experienced growth of nearly 400% in revenue related to their conference affiliation between 2005 and 2020. The Knight Commission’s research was based on publicly available information from the public universities. While the vast majority of revenue distributed to the athletics departments of the Power Five conference institutions is derived from the conferences themselves due to shared media rights, revenue from the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament represents about 8% of the nearly $2.8 billion distributed through the conferences to the institutions. Unlike the other revenues that are most frequently evenly divided among the schools, revenue from the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament is calculated by the NCAA based on an institution’s participation and success in the men’s basketball championship.

In the past decade, these Power Five Conference institutions have invested nearly a billion dollars in athletics facilities used exclusively by an institution’s football team. Many of these facilities have luxury-type items like lazy rivers, miniature golf courses, arcades, custom Italian-leathered furniture, bathroom mirrors which double as televisions, barber shops, and extravagant player lounges.¹⁰

The chart below illustrates the financial benefits to athletics departments from affiliating with their conference and competing in the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament. This
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revenue which is largely from shared television revenue has grown exponentially over time. In order to maximize that revenue, athletics programs have invested heavily in facilities and coaching salaries in the sports of men’s basketball and football. These two sports generate nearly all of the revenue to support every program within athletics departments with the largest budgets.

While these expenditures are spent to the benefit of the students that participate in the sport that earns the most money, the expenses have crowded out spending for sports programs that do not generate revenue. In fact, per student spending on sports other than football and men’s and women’s basketball in the Southeastern Conference, the top revenue-generating conference in America, has been stagnant over the past decade when adjusted for inflation.\(^{11}\)

Despite the large expenditures on scholarships, travel for competition, facilities, and salaries, many institutions in Power Five Conferences are completely self-sufficient and receive no contributions from tax dollars or the general funds of their institution.
COVID-19

On March 12, 2020, each of the Power Five Conferences cancelled their men’s basketball tournaments due to COVID-19 pandemic. Later that same day, an announcement from NCAA Men’s Basketball Committee Chair, Kevin White, cancelled the 2020 Men’s Basketball tournament. Shortly thereafter, the NCAA announced the cancellation of all winter championships. Within weeks, the cancellation notice was revised, and all college sports were cancelled through the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic year. This was the first time the NCAA men’s basketball tournament was cancelled since 1939. The elimination of revenue distribution from the cancellation of that single, month-long tournament cost Power Five institutions in conferences with successful basketball programs like those of the Power Five approximately $2 million per school in revenue distribution.

Throughout the late spring and early summer of 2020, it became clear that public health authorities would recommend that large gatherings be avoided. This left football, the largest source of revenue for Power Five conference institutions, in jeopardy for the fall. With ticket revenue and television revenue both in the balance, many athletics directors responded by making the difficult decision to eliminate certain sports programs.

During this same timeframe, since July 1, 2020, Stanford cut 11 sports programs including men’s and women’s fencing, field hockey, lightweight rowing, men’s rowing, co-ed and women’s sailing, squash, synchronized swimming, men’s volleyball, and wrestling. In doing so, the well-respected athletics director, Bernard Muir, cited “financial stability” and “competitive excellence” as the determining factors. While he did not explicitly blame the pandemic for the
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financial condition which led to his decision, Athletics Director Bernard Muir noted that the pandemic accelerated the timeline for cutting the eleven programs. When Stanford, a private university, decided to drop 11 sports programs, it eliminated the opportunity for 240 student athletes to compete at the university. As a point of reference, 4,000 Stanford alumni that competed on those teams won 20 national championships for Stanford Athletics and 27 Olympic medals.

In August 2020, together with President Bruce Harreld, Athletics Director Gary Barta announced that the University of Iowa would discontinue its men’s tennis, men’s gymnastics and men’s and women’s swimming and diving programs. Due to a court order related to gender equity, the University of Iowa announced on February 15, 2021 that it was reinstating its women’s swimming and diving program.

In September 2020, University of Minnesota Athletics Director Mark Coyle announced his plans to eliminate four Minnesota athletics teams. As justification, Coyle cited revenue issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Title IX compliance, as the reasons for his proposal to eliminate men’s gymnastics, men’s indoor and outdoor track and field, and men’s gymnastics—all men’s programs, all with traditions of competitive excellence, none of which earn the athletics department any revenue.

Publicly funded state institutions from Power Five conferences, with pressure from their various boards and legislatures to have self-reliant athletics departments, have elected to trim their budgets by eliminating sports programs during the COVID-19 pandemic almost exclusively by eliminating men’s sports teams. In fact, in October 2020 Michigan State became an outlier
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when Athletics Director Bill Beekman announced the university’s plan to drop its women’s swimming and diving program alongside its decision to drop men’s swimming and diving (although the elimination of the women’s program remains ensnarled in the courts due to the implications to the institution’s compliance with Title IX).

Then, in November 2020, Athletics Director Dan Radakovich announced Clemson University’s plans to drop its successful men’s cross country, men’s indoor track and field, and men’s outdoor track and field programs. Prior to this, in their 67 years of existence, Clemson University’s men’s track and field programs had accumulated 23 Atlantic Coast Conference championships, 16 individuals had been crowned national champion, and the programs had produced 22 Olympians.
The chart below illustrates each Power Five conference-affiliated, NCAA Division I athletics department that has announced the elimination of a sports program during the pandemic. Four of these five institutions, all but Stanford, are publicly funded institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Number of Programs Reduced</th>
<th>Programs Reduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clemson</td>
<td>Atlantic Coast</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Men's Cross Country, Men's Indoor Track and Field, Men's Outdoor Track and Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Big Ten</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Men's Gymnastics, Men's Tennis, Men's Swimming &amp; Diving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State</td>
<td>Big Ten</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Men's Swimming &amp; Diving, Women's Swimming &amp; Diving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Big Ten</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Men's Gymnastics, Men's Tennis, Men's Indoor Track &amp; Field, Men's Outdoor Track &amp; Field*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford</td>
<td>Pac-12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Men's Fencing, Women's Fencing, Field Hockey, Women's Light Rowing, Women's Rowing, Co-ed Sailing, Women's Sailing, Women's Squash, Synchronized Swimming, Men's Volleyball, and Wrestling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minnesota's Board of Regents removed the elimination of men's outdoor track from consideration, saving the program from being cut.
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While institutions from Power Five Conferences have dropped 23 programs since COVID-19 reached the United States, all five institutions from Power Five conferences that have dropped programs cite Title IX compliance as one determining factor while leaning on the economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as the root cause for eliminating the programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline of Related Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 31, 1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 7, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 21, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 22, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 15, 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis and Findings

To determine and evaluate how the decision to keep or cut athletics programs is made, a well-respected athletics director from each of the Power Five conferences was interviewed. Additionally, a seasoned FCS athletics director was interviewed to learn how each of these leaders view the important decision on cutting sports programs. The following athletics directors were interviewed as a part of this analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athletics Director</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Interview Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rob Mullens</td>
<td>University of Oregon</td>
<td>Pacific-12</td>
<td>Division I- FBS- A5</td>
<td>March 25, 2021 (Noon-12:30pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Pollard</td>
<td>Iowa State University</td>
<td>Big XII</td>
<td>Division I- FBS- A5</td>
<td>March 26, 2021 (1:00pm-1:30pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Coyle</td>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>Big 10</td>
<td>Division I- FBS- A5</td>
<td>March 26, 2021 (10:30am-11:00am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Stricklin</td>
<td>University of Florida</td>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>Division I- FBS- A5</td>
<td>March 26, 2021 (noon-12:30pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Lyke</td>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Atlantic Coast</td>
<td>Division I- FBS- A5</td>
<td>April 1, 2021 (1:30pm-2:00pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Moats</td>
<td>Missouri State University</td>
<td>Missouri Valley</td>
<td>Division I- FCS</td>
<td>March 26, 2021 (3:00pm-3:30pm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rob Mullens - University of Oregon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oregon Ducks</th>
<th>Pac-12 Conference</th>
<th>Eugene, OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sports</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8 Men's/12 Women's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student-Athletes</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>301 Men/290 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>17,540</td>
<td>8,054 Men/9,486 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Cost of Attendance</td>
<td>In-State $31,656</td>
<td>Out-of-State $58,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rob Mullens has been athletics director at the University of Oregon since July 15, 2010 and was named the National Association of College Directors of Athletics (NACDA)’s 2020 Athletics Director of the Year. At the University of Oregon, he oversees a program consisting of 20 sports programs. All but one of them, Acrobatics and Tumbling, competes in the twelve member Pacific-12 Conference (the Pac-12). Mullens noted in his interview that at Oregon,
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decisions about which sports programs to offer have been primarily driven by gender equity
concerns and the requirements to be in compliance with the spirit of Title IX.

Mullens shared that his priorities when evaluating the sports program offerings at Oregon
are 1) compliance with Title IX (demographics), 2) competitive excellence (development), and 3)
finances (dollars).

Prior to Mullens’s arrival at the University of Oregon, the institution had added Acrobatics
and Tumbling, a women’s team which carries 39 student athletes on the roster. Although the
program was added prior to Mullens’s time at Oregon, the addition of this high roster count,
women’s sports team met all three of Mullens’s priorities related to his evaluation of sports
offerings. Adding an Acrobatics and Tumbling program improved the number of opportunities
for women by adding 39 roster spots and assisted Oregon with Title IX compliance. Additionally,
Oregon is currently the top-ranked program in intercollegiate acrobatics and tumbling which
meets his second priority, competitive excellence. Finally, according to Mullens, the program has
annual expenses which are paid by the athletics department of approximately $1.5
million. However, the total full cost of attendance for these 39 athletes to attend the University
of Oregon is more than $2.2 million. The economic impact of Oregon’s Acrobatics and Tumbling
program far exceeds the expenditure by the athletics department to operate the program.

“For Oregon’s athletics department, broad-based excellence is a top priority. Every
decision we make is made with the priority of putting Oregon student athletes in the best
position to be successful—in sport and in life.” -Rob Mullens, Director of Athletics,
University of Oregon
Jamie Pollard has been the athletics director at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, since 2005. Iowa State competes in the ten-member Big XII conference. In 2019, Pollard was named NACDA Athletics Director of the Year. With 16 years at Iowa State, Pollard is the nation’s fourth-longest serving Football Bowl Subdivision athletics director behind only Oklahoma’s Joe Castiglione, Kentucky’s Mitch Barnhart, and Ohio State’s Gene Smith.17

To prepare for potential fallouts of the Great Recession, Pollard assembled a team to evaluate Iowa State’s sports offerings in 2008. While ultimately Iowa State University determined that cutting sports was not in its best interest, it established criteria to help guide the decision on which sport or sports it would cut if conditions forced that move.

The exercise at Iowa State was about reducing offerings, and Oregon’s exercise was about which program to add. Both athletics departments used competitive excellence as the first standard. In fact, Iowa State’s first evaluation was to determine where among their Big XII peers each program finished over the past five seasons. For Pollard at Iowa State it was clear: winning matters.

Pollard believes in Iowa State’s mission as a land grant institution to serve the people of the State of Iowa.18 Because of this, his team evaluated their current sports lineup by comparing it to the number of high schools in the state of Iowa that offered each sport. Similarly, the team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iowa State Cyclones</th>
<th>Big XII Conference</th>
<th>Ames, IA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sports</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7 Men’s/11 Women’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student-Athletes</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>291 Men/240 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>27,832</td>
<td>15,988 Men/11,844 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Cost of Attendance</td>
<td>In-State $21,940</td>
<td>Out-of-State $37,128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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deed of administrators evaluated each sports’ roster to determine the number of Iowans on each Iowa State team. Next, Iowa State’s evaluation determined the number of schools in the Big XII with a team in each of Iowa State’s programs and the percentage of schools in the NCAA that offer each of Iowa State’s programs.

Interestingly, Iowa State’s leadership sought to measure each sports program’s compatibility with academics by determining the number of days of missed classes that each sports team requires. In sports like volleyball and softball, this number is high due to contests being held during the week, whereas football teams in Power Five conferences rarely miss due to football.

Pollard’s proactive approach—an approach that had Iowa State prepared rather than responsive—stands out among his peers that were interviewed as a part of this research.

“My commitment is to continue to support all 18 of our sports, and cutting sports in response to a budget crisis is not a healthy approach. We also know that situations arise that may be beyond our control, so we try to do everything we can to provide a flexible platform for discussion and consideration of those scenarios before we are in the heat of the moment. We are then better prepared and positioned to reach sound and rational decisions.”- Jamie Pollard, Director of Athletics, Iowa State University

Mark Coyle- University of Minnesota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnesota Golden Gophers</th>
<th>Big 10 Conference</th>
<th>Minneapolis, MN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sports</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12 Men’s/13 Women’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student-Athletes</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>358 Men/324 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>29,227</td>
<td>13,569 Men/15,658 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Cost of Attendance</td>
<td>In-State $28,942</td>
<td>Out-of-State $48,740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Mark Coyle has served as the athletics director at the University of Minnesota since May 2016 after serving in the same capacity at Boise State University and Syracuse University, respectively. Under his care, student athletes at Minnesota have amassed 15 conference championships while earning a cumulative grade point average of 3.27 (the highest student athlete GPA in Minnesota athletics history).

An October 9, 2020 letter to the University of Minnesota Community from the University of Minnesota communicated to stakeholders the Board of Regents’ vote to affirm a recommendation to discontinue Minnesota’s Men’s Gymnastics, Men’s Tennis, and Men’s Indoor Track and Field. According to the letter, Minnesota’s decision to cut sports offerings was primarily related to “financial challenges facing the athletics department but was also mindful of the University’s commitment to honor its Title IX obligations. Gopher Athletics also considered community impact, local and national interest, competitiveness, and sport sponsorship at the Big Ten and NCAA Division I level” when making their decision.19

When exploring the financial challenges facing Minnesota’s athletics department during an interview for this project, Coyle shared the expectation at Minnesota that its athletics department be self-sufficient. Further, it is the expectation placed on athletics that student athletes are provided with a first-class experience with each team being highly competitive for Big Ten championships annually.

While the sports programs were eliminated with the purpose of reducing costs, it is important to note that the athletics department had already made several cost-savings efforts in 2020. These efforts included implementing a personnel cost-reduction plan that reduced the
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salaries of top-earners in the athletics department, furloughing several positions and permanently eliminating several positions within the department.

While many suggest further reducing salaries for highly paid coaches and the athletics director as a better solution than making program cuts, the Minnesota athletics director is the 11th highest paid athletics director in the Big Ten, Minnesota Coach PJ Fleck is the 10th highest paid football coach in the Big Ten, and Minnesota men’s and women’s basketball coaches are the lowest paid in their positions in the Big Ten Conference. If resources and expectations were aligned, those four individuals would be the highest paid in the Big Ten Conference because fans of Minnesota Athletics expect championships from each of them.

Although finances (dollars) were the reason that sports program cuts were made, it was Title IX (demographics) that guided the decision on which programs to discontinue. In fact, the changes in sports program offerings are forecasted to yield a better alignment with the gender split of student athletes who participate in athletics with gender make-up of students across the university.20

“Our goal for the last few years was to create a nimble athletic department, one that was self-sufficient, competed at the highest level, and provided a first-class experience for our student athletes. We experienced record-level fundraising during the last several years and reduced our operating budgets during both FY 19 and FY 20. When COVID-19 struck, we adjusted, and members of our executive team and several head coaches volunteered for two separate pay reductions. We previously reduced $5 million from our FY 21 budget and implemented hiring and spending freezes. Despite these
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"financial efforts, we can still no longer sustain 25 programs." - Joan T.A. Gabel, Minnesota President and Mark Coyle, Minnesota Director of Athletics

Scott Stricklin-University of Florida

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florida Gators</th>
<th>Southeastern Conference</th>
<th>Gainesville, FL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sports</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9 Men's/12 Women's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student-Athletes</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>342 Men/293 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>31,746</td>
<td>13,633 Men/18,113 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Cost of Attendance</td>
<td>In-State $21,430</td>
<td>Out-of-State $43,708</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In November 2016, Scott Stricklin was named athletics director at the University of Florida after a successful stint in the same role at his alma mater, Mississippi State University.

The University of Florida’s athletics department is separate from the University of Florida with its own board of directors that serves as fiduciary. This organization is formally incorporated as “University Athletic Association, Incorporated” and commonly known as the UAA. The UAA is a non-profit corporation, and the athletics director serves as its chief financial officer.

Stricklin shared in the interview the wide variance between the resources at Mississippi State University and the University of Florida. Despite the differing resources, neither institution has contemplated reducing its sports offerings in Stricklin’s time at either institution. When asked how he would prioritize his principles if faced with the decision to cut a sports program, Stricklin asserted that the only reason to eliminate a sports program at a place like Florida would be related to finances. Secondarily, Stricklin believes that gender equity would be a strong consideration in determining which program or programs to terminate.
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Stricklin is currently serving as chair of a task force established by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee. His work evaluating the relationship between the Olympic Games and American colleges and universities is largely due to the pipeline provided to Team USA by Power Five conference institutions. The creation of the task force underscores the institutions’ commitment to preparing student athletes for the Olympic Games. However, as resources have become restrained for Power Five Conference athletics departments, athletics directors have increasingly looked to the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee for a solution.

“The fact that we’re one of the few countries that competes at the level we do on the Olympic stage and we do so without having our government fund the program is because of college athletics and what it does to develop Olympic athletes.”

—Scott Stricklin, Director of Athletics, University of Florida

Heather Lyke- University of Pittsburgh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pittsburgh Panthers</th>
<th>Atlantic Coast Conference</th>
<th>Pittsburgh, PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sports</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9 Men’s/10 Women’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student-Athletes</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>323 Men/259 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>19,200</td>
<td>9,024 Men/10,176 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Cost of Attendance</td>
<td>In-State $37,070</td>
<td>Out-of-State $54,056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heather Lyke has served as the athletics director at the University of Pittsburgh since 2017. Upon her appointment, Lyke became the first woman to serve in that role at Pittsburgh. Previously, she served as vice president and director of athletics at Eastern Michigan University.

When asked about what principles she uses to make a decision on which sports program or programs to terminate, Lyke acknowledged that the pressures on the finances of major college
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athletics became even greater during the pandemic. However, she stopped short of agreeing that cutting sports programs is a strategy to be employed to mitigate the financial issues of the day. Instead, Lyke believes that, when possible, an athletics director should work with university leadership on a path forward that maintains an institution’s existing sports program offerings if the issue at hand is financial. In fact, Lyke specifically mentioned the revenue generated by athletics by students who compete in athletics and do not receive full scholarships and the revenue received by the university from students affiliated with athletics who do not compete on a varsity sports team. Examples include the hundreds of students in Pittsburgh’s marching band, cheerleading squad, dance team and other spirit groups.

“I don’t know of any athletics director who wants to cut opportunities for young people to compete. Cutting a program would be the last resort for me.” - Heather Lyke, Director of Athletics, University of Pittsburgh

Kyle Moats- Missouri State University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missouri State Bears</th>
<th>Missouri Valley</th>
<th>Springfield, MO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sports</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6 Men's/11 Women's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Student-Athletes</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>215 Men/258 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>14,858</td>
<td>6,173 Men/8,685 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Cost of Attendance</td>
<td>In-State $22,720</td>
<td>Out-of-State $31,390</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Kyle Moats is the athletics director at Missouri State University where he has served in that same role since 2009. Prior to becoming athletics director at Missouri State, Moats served as an assistant athletics director at Power Five conference members Kentucky and Louisville.

In contrast with the funding model for institutions in Power Five conferences -- where athletics departments are largely responsible for self-generating revenue to fund athletics--
those in the Football Championship Subdivision rely on other revenue sources, like student fees and direct institutional support, to create their annual budgets.

At Missouri State, Moats established a committee in 2013 to evaluate the university’s offerings of women’s sports programs. The charge of the committee was to make recommendations to the university president on the university’s current offerings of intercollegiate athletics opportunities for women.

In an interview, Moats shared that the group’s focus was to determine if the institution was meeting the athletic interests and needs of the female student population at Missouri State University and to maintain compliance with Title IX. Moats noted that Missouri State used much of the same criteria to evaluate its sports program offerings that Pollard used at Iowa State. The key difference between the two, he said, was that Missouri State’s task force evaluated the fundraising potential of any future sports programs and its current offerings. The result of the work of the Missouri State task force was the elimination of the university’s field hockey team and the addition of a women’s tennis program and a women’s beach volleyball team. The task force at Missouri State believed that the addition of these two programs and the elimination of field hockey better meets the interests and abilities of the Missouri State University student body and better aligns the university with the requirements of Title IX.

“From an emotional standpoint because I got into this business to provide opportunities for young people to compete, this is the worst thing I have had to do in my career... the worst,” Kyle Moats said of making the decision to eliminate Missouri State’s field hockey program.25
Conclusion and Recommendation

The interviews of athletics directors from across the country who are members of each of the five Power Five conferences demonstrate the expectation that major college athletics departments be completely self-sufficient. The interviews make evident that financial pressure is the primary cause of athletics departments affiliated with Power Five conferences reducing sports programs. In fact, each of the five athletics directors at institutions affiliated with Power Five conferences highlighted that they feel pressure from their university administration or governing board to self-generate enough revenue to operate their athletics department. Further, four of the five (all but Heather Lyke at Pittsburgh) athletics directors are committed to transferring funds to their university annually to fund programs unrelated to athletics while maintaining a financially self-sufficient athletics department.

While 23 athletics programs were eliminated at institutions who are members of Power Five conferences in 2020 due primarily to budget constraints exacerbated by COVID-19, many of these same sports programs ultimately generate more revenue for their institution and community than the expense the programs create for the athletics department. If the principles of decision making established by the aforementioned athletics directors (Iowa State’s Jamie Pollard, Missouri State’s Kyle Moats, Oregon’s Rob Mullens and Pittsburgh’s Heather Lyke) were employed at the institutions within Power Five conferences that cut sports this past year citing the financial fallout of COVID-19, it is reasonable to believe that the leaders at those institutions may have reached a different conclusion.

The chart below illustrates the expenditures of each athletics department and compares those expenditures to the total cost of attendance for each eliminated team’s total aggregated
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cost of attendance. This total cash outlay is derived from a combination of the athletics scholarships funded by the athletics department and payments by the student athletes themselves (both from students who are on partial scholarships or walk-ons who receive no scholarship at all.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Total OPEX</th>
<th>Scholarship Equivalencies</th>
<th>Number of Students on Team</th>
<th>Number of In-State Students on Roster</th>
<th>In-State Total Cost of Attendance</th>
<th>Number of Out-of-State Students on Roster</th>
<th>Out-of-State Total Cost of Attendance</th>
<th>Total Student Expenditure for Team</th>
<th>Net Gain/Loss of Dropping Sport for Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University Men’s Swimming and Diving</td>
<td>950,006</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$ 29,294</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$ 55,400</td>
<td>$ 1,319,434</td>
<td>$ (389,428)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University Women’s Swimming and Diving</td>
<td>1,145,455</td>
<td>13.72</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$ 29,294</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$ 55,400</td>
<td>$ 1,518,116</td>
<td>$ (374,651)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Men’s Cross Country, Indoor and Outdoor Track &amp; Field</td>
<td>2,251,751</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$ 34,756</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$ 52,757</td>
<td>$ 2,299,543</td>
<td>$ (47,702)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Men’s Gymnastics</td>
<td>855,129</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$ 28,942</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$ 48,740</td>
<td>$ 895,668</td>
<td>$ (30,039)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Men’s Tennis</td>
<td>836,082</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 38,043</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$ 48,740</td>
<td>$ 428,006</td>
<td>$ 397,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Men’s Indoor Track</td>
<td>NEGLIGIBLE CHANGE TO CURRENT DUE TO SUSTAINING MEN’S OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 387,067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Men’s Gymnastics</td>
<td>995,580</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$ 26,240</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$ 48,209</td>
<td>$ 932,320</td>
<td>$ (172,720)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Men’s Tennis</td>
<td>855,787</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$ 26,240</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$ 48,209</td>
<td>$ 805,672</td>
<td>$ (472,135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Men’s Swimming &amp; Diving</td>
<td>1,051,166</td>
<td>10.15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 26,246</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$ 48,209</td>
<td>$ 1,580,381</td>
<td>$ 318,215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of the University of Minnesota’s elimination of Men’s Track and Field, Men’s Gymnastics, and Men’s Tennis, all other public institutions in a Power Five conference that eliminated a sports program during 2020 had a compelling case to make to the institution’s president and board. The basis of this argument was that eliminating the sports program due to budget constraints would be an unwise financial decision for the institution to make. In fact, it is advisable that athletics administrators educate university presidents and finance officers of the
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positive financial impact that athletics programs have on the institution so that administrators have a baseline understanding of the financial implications of each program.

Notably, all of the sports programs that have been eliminated have a small number of full scholarship equivalencies relative to the number of students participating on each team. Because of this, the amount spent by the student athletes to attend their university far exceeds the amount spent by the athletics departments on athletics scholarships each team provides. In fact, more often than not, the total amount spent to attend each university for most teams exceeds the total amount spent by the athletics department to operate the program that is being eliminated.

Using the lessons learned from the interviews described in the previous section where finances were a fundamental part of the decision making process, the following section will examine how these processes apply to the specific situation within Michigan State University’s athletics programs. When applied to any member of a Power Five conference, using the same logic will give university administrators and governing authorities a more holistic view of the impact of a sports program. In many cases, including that of Michigan State University’s elimination of both men’s and women’s swimming and diving, looking beyond the athletics department’s budget savings to determine the overall financial impact to the university community provides a different perspective—one that might save programs from elimination.

In this specific example, Michigan State University dropped its men’s and women’s swimming and diving programs in 2020 as a cost-savings measure for its self-supporting athletics department. According to the institution’s financial filing with the NCAA, the men’s swimming and diving program had total operating expenses of $930,006. This figure includes the salaries
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of the coaches, the 9.52 full scholarships (inclusive of cost-of-attendance dollars) paid to the university by the athletics department on the students’ behalf, all travel, and other expenses associated with operating the program. The 2019 Michigan State men’s swimming and diving roster included 29 athletes. Of those, 18 attended Michigan State from out of state and 11 were Michigan residents. Recognizing that the full cost of attendance for an out-of-state student is $55,400 and the full cost of attendance for a Michigan resident is $29,294, the total expenditure for those 29 students to attend Michigan State University was $1,319,434.

At Michigan State, like many but not all public universities, enrollment is not constrained. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that the 29 members of the Michigan State men’s swimming and diving program would have elected to swim or dive at a different university rather than attend Michigan State without a swimming and diving program. While cutting men’s swimming and diving will save Michigan State’s athletics department $930,006, if these students no longer attend Michigan State University, it creates a net loss of revenue to the university of $389,428 in tuition and fees, room and board to the university as well as expenditures in the East Lansing, Michigan community.

The same is true of Michigan State’s women’s swimming team that was eliminated due to the financial constraints of 2020. In the case of that team, and according to the institution’s public filing with the NCAA, the Michigan State athletics department spends $1,143,455 to operate the team, which includes salaries and scholarships.

When aggregating the total expenses affiliated with attending Michigan State by all of the athletes on both the men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams, the total outlay is nearly $3 million. Therefore, eliminating the two swimming and diving programs at Michigan State to
save approximately $2 million for the athletics department comes at a net cost of $764,095 to
the university.

Athletics departments serve a vital role in their university’s mission by providing
individuals with elite athletic talent a college education, exposing students to student athletes
from all over the world. It is recommended that athletics directors and finance professionals
within athletics departments clearly communicate with senior administrators regularly about the
benefits of athletics to the university community. Additionally, competitive athletics programs
are a source of pride for alumni, are often the first impression of the university for prospective
students, and unify current students and the community.

All told, two of the four public universities who are members of Power Five conferences
may have avoided eliminating sports programs by evaluating the total financial impact of
eliminating the sports program rather than exclusively focusing on the impact of the programs
on the athletics departments’ budgets. This, of course, requires the collaboration of athletics
department personnel and university administrators. As Iowa State’s Jamie Pollard concluded in
his interview, these conversations are only fruitful when they occur outside the pressures of the
“heat of the moment.” Therefore, a prudent athletics administrator would be wise to engage in
dialogue with university financial officers and senior administrators about the financial benefits
of athletics to the university beyond the transfers of funds from an athletics department to its
campus. This is especially true in public universities where enrollment is not constrained, and a
lost student is lost revenue. When senior university administrators understand the value of
athletics, including the full economic impact to the university from the loss of revenue, they will
be more likely to sustain the opportunities for future students rather than eliminate
Afterword

On the afternoon of April 22, 2021, Clemson University President Jim Clements reinstituted the Clemson University men’s cross country and men’s indoor and outdoor track and field programs. In his remarks, President Clements shared that Clemson University has reevaluated the finances of its athletics department, the financial impact of COVID-19, and the long-term financial viability of its athletics department. President Clements went on to explain his dedication to gender equity by committing to add new women’s sports offerings in the future while sustaining the current offerings of sports programs.

“This is the right decision for our university, our department of athletics, and most importantly, for the men and women who proudly wear the Clemson uniform. I am thrilled that we are able to continue these men’s programs, and I am excited for the new varsity opportunities we will soon be adding for our female student athletes.” - Clemson University President Jim Clements.

Clemson University Athletics Director Dan Radakovich highlighted the principles of finance and gender equity in his commentary on the reinstatement of the men’s programs. Further, he indicated that Clemson University is financially backing the athletics department in the interim, an indication that Clemson’s leadership understands the impact of losing students due to the elimination of a sports program.

“I am appreciative of the support of the university and our collaboration that will allow us to not only maintain our current sports portfolio but add to it in the very near
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future. As we communicated previously, the original decision was difficult, and we did what was necessary at the time to maintain compliance with gender equity while addressing our financial situation. I am excited about the future of Clemson Athletics and for our student athletes.”- Clemson University Athletics Director Dan Radakovich

The purpose of this research and the recommendations resulting from it is to prevent the unnecessary elimination of sports programs. University administrators must take a more macro approach when contemplating their sports program offerings and evaluate the overall impact of each sports program before deciding to eliminate one. Certainly, the leadership at Clemson would agree that avoiding the elimination of their men’s cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field programs would have been better than eliminating it only to reinstate it months later.
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18. https://www.landgrant.iastate.edu/


24. https://missouristatebears.com/staff-directory/kyle-moats/1

Appendix I- Guideline for Qualitative Interviews

Subject:
Institution:
Conference:
Number of Sports:
Approximate number of student athletes:
Approximate university enrollment (undergraduate):

Generally, what would be the process for determining the addition or elimination of a sports program?

D-Development of Athletes toward the Olympic Games

- Does your institution highlight Olympians that have competed at the school as a student recruitment activity? If so, in what ways?
- Does the potential for students to make the Olympic team of their country factor in to determining what sports to add or cut?

D- Dollars

No university has eliminated a revenue-positive/profitable sports program in at least the past 25 years.

- What impact do finances have on your institution’s decision to add a sport?
  - Which of the following best Do you have specific expectations of a response? “1) Finances Drive the Decision 100%, 2) A Great Amount, 3) Little impact, 4) No impact – Finances are not considered?”
- What impact would finances have on determining which sport to add?
  - “Would you describe finances’ impact your institution’s decision to add a sport as “1) Finances Driving the Decision 100%, 2) Finances Driving the Decision a Great Amount, 3) Finances Having Little Impact, or 4) Finances Having No impact”.
- When determining whether to cut a sport, what impact do finances have?
  - “If not, what factors impact the decision?”
- If your institution decides to cut a sport, do finances guide which sport to cut?
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- Nearly every sport that has been cut over the past 25 years is an “equivalency sport”. By design, more students on an equivalency sports team pay the institution than receive a full grant-in-aid/scholarship. Does cutting a sport on your campus have a negative or positive impact on the institution’s finances?
  - “If yes, how?”

D- Demographics

- If your institution were to consider eliminating a sports program (or adding one) how would gender equity factor into that decision?
- At your institution, do you believe that eliminating a women’s team would affect your institution’s compliance with Title IX?
  - If no, why not?
  - If yes, how so?
- What demographic characteristics would be considered when making the decision to eliminate a program?
- “Do your institutions athletic programs contribute to the diversity of the institution?”
  - If yes,
    - “Do you have examples of that?”
Appendix II- The IRB Process

The IRB Process and the Research on Sports Program Sponsorship in Higher Education

The qualitative, interview-based research performed as a part of this research project is not subject to the IRB process because the research will gather information about institutional policies and procedures. Importantly, no personal data will be collected during the interviews. Instead, the participants in interviews will share the values of the institution for which they work as well as the process used to make decisions related to continuation of individual sports programs.

Summary on Internal Review Board’s foundation and purpose

When engaging in activities involving research, students, faculty and staff at the University of Kentucky must evaluate the regulations set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to determine if the research requires review and subsequent approval of the IRB. To require IRB review and approval, an activity must meet both the definition of “research” and use “human subjects” as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The Department of Health and Human Services which will be led by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra upon the confirmation by the United States Senate, sets policy related to research and the regulatory definitions of “research” and “human subjects”. In parallel, the United States Food and Drug Administration sets policy related to research and the regulatory definitions of “clinical investigation” and “human subjects”.

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The purpose of the IRB process is to protect the rights, and ultimately the well-being, of the individuals participating as subjects in research. As is the case with most governmental regulations and laws, there are inciting incidents which trigger their creation. The IRB process was largely created in response to the Nuremburg Code\(^1\) (a result of the Nuremburg trials of World War II war crimes committed by the Nazis) and the abuses of human subjects in the Tuskegee Study\(^2\) (commonly referred to as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment). In both of those incidents, the subjects of the research were involuntary participants, had their basic human rights violated, or were otherwise abused by researchers.

Both the Nuremburg and Tuskegee incidents are evidence of the importance of protecting the rights and overall well-being of the subjects of research. Especially in the modern environment with a prevalence of social media, protecting the identity of human subjects becomes an obvious benefit of the IRB requirements. Notably, the IRB process ensures that human subjects the IRB process was created to prevent these abuses and to protect the rights of the individuals who participate as subjects of research.


\(^2\) [https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/after.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/after.htm)
Appendix III- Other Literature


https://www.latimes.com/sports/story/2020-05-30/nearly-100-college-sports-programs-have-been-cut-during-pandemic


https://www.billiejeanking.com/equality/title-ix/#:~:text=The%20law%20opened%20doors%20and,1057%20percent%20and%20by%20614


https://www.forbes.com/sites/karenweaver/2020/10/05/minnesota-drops-98-athletes-from-program-while-spending-millions-on-testing-for-football/?sh=3b1f1f198f5b

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https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/finances-intercollegiate-athletics