

***Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission
on Intercollegiate Athletics***

March 2006

COMMISSION MEMBERS

*Mr. Travis Bluemling
Student Athlete, Athletic Council*

*Mr. Chad Charton
President, Associated Students*

*Mr. Ron Clouse
Director, Budget Planning & Management*

*Dr. Cedric Dempsey (Consultant to the Commission)
President Emeritus, National Collegiate Athletic Association*

*Mr. Dan Guerrero
Director of Athletics, UCLA*

*Dr. Akiko Hirota
Faculty Athletics Representative*

*Ms. Janet Lucas (Commission Administrative Support)
Interim Director of Athletics*

*Dr. Ronald McIntyre
Faculty President*

*Dr. Michael Neubauer
Chair, Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory Council
Professor, Department of Mathematics*

*Dr. Mo Qayoumi (Commission Chair)
Vice President for Administration and Finance, and CFO*

*Mr. Pierre Tada
Member, CSUN Foundation Board of Directors / CSUN Alumnus*

*Mr. Gary Victor
Head Coach, Women's Tennis*

*Dr. William Watkins
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*

INTRODUCTION

In fall 2005, California State University, Northridge President Jolene Koester announced the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and directed the commission to develop **“a road map to excellence for the next five years”** in athletics. The president’s charge included the following:

“Recommend a new comprehensive strategic plan that promotes a sense of pride in the people and the accomplishments of intercollegiate athletics. This plan should be built on a foundation of integrity, a quality student-athlete experience, and continuous striving for excellence in the classroom and in competition.”

In reviewing the full charge (Appendix A) with President Koester, Vice President Mo Qayoumi and Consultant Cedric Dempsey agreed that the Commission’s charge included conducting a thorough review of the Intercollegiate Athletics program. The Commission completed an assessment of Athletics and established goals consistent with the mission of the University. In this report, the Commission has made numerous recommendations on how these goals can be achieved. To implement these recommendations, the Commission urges that a strategic action plan be developed for the Athletic Department under the leadership of Vice President Qayoumi.

From September to December 2005, the Commission met six times as a full body. Commission members also formed four subcommittees (on Academics, Community Relations, Facilities and Finance) to meet and provide detailed study and recommendations in those areas. The result was the Commission’s endorsement of the following five goals for the Intercollegiate Athletics program, consistent with the University’s Mission Statement (Appendix B):

- 1. Help Intercollegiate Athletics become a more integral and valued University endeavor that draws greater participation and financial support from students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding region.**
- 2. Evaluate and enhance the academic performance of student-athletes with a focus on improving graduation rates and NCAA Academic Progress Rate results.**
- 3. Evaluate and develop a financial plan that will enable Intercollegiate Athletics to achieve the recommendations of the Commission.**
- 4. Strengthen the competitive position of the Athletic Department and its current sports programs within Division I-AAA of the NCAA and the Big West Conference.**
- 5. Assure that Intercollegiate Athletics is built on a foundation of integrity, pride, excellence and quality.**

Members of the Commission appreciate the opportunity to have served California State University, Northridge in evaluating the status of the University’s Intercollegiate Athletics program and presenting these goals and recommendations for its future success.

OVERVIEW

As the only four-year public university in the San Fernando Valley region, California State University, Northridge is uniquely situated to offer a broad and exciting intercollegiate athletic program that captures not only the attention and support of the campus community, but also more broadly among the 2 million people who live in the region served by the University.

Since Cal State Northridge elevated its athletic program to NCAA Division I status in 1990-91, there have been flashes of the kind of collective excitement, campus and community spirit, and enhanced institutional identity and loyalty that intercollegiate athletics can engender. Recall the women's basketball team's 1999 miracle season that climaxed in their first-ever trip to the NCAA tournament, or the men's basketball team's nationally televised win over UCLA in 2000 followed by their first-ever NCAA tournament appearance in spring 2001. As an account at the time reflected, "The [UCLA] upset, televised on cable network Fox Sports West II, brought floods of congratulations to the University, boosted attendance at home games, spurred unprecedented media coverage, and cast a bright aura over the entire campus."

Indeed, at its best, intercollegiate athletics has the potential to create that kind of *esprit de corps* for a university, bringing greater attention, enthusiasm and support for the broader spectrum of University endeavors, especially its core academic programs. Yet in recent years, those flashes of excitement and involvement have been too fleeting. Although Northridge athletics is a nearly \$7 million-a-year program with 20 intercollegiate teams and some 400 student-athletes, the program has struggled to attract a consistently devoted and broad following, both on campus and in the surrounding community. That needs to change!

After studying Northridge athletics during fall 2005, this Commission believes the University's athletic program still has the potential to emerge from the periphery and become a far more well-recognized and appreciated asset, one that brings credit to itself and its institution. To accomplish this, however, major changes will be required. First, the role of athletics *within* the University itself has to change, with the program needing to actively reach out to students, faculty, staff and alumni to forge far stronger bonds of interest and support. Creating that excitement within the campus community is essential for the program to then spread that sentiment to the broader Valley.

Looking at Northridge athletics within the context of the program's primary affiliation with the Big West Conference, it also became clear that athletics' current funding levels are modest for a program of its size and scope, especially compared to its conference peers. It is certainly reasonable to assume and expect that a more robustly funded athletics program ultimately would be more successful both in competition and establishing itself as a prominent, motivating force on campus and in the community.

Thus, this Commission believes for Northridge to continue offering its current broad-based NCAA Division I athletics program, the campus and the community need to step up and support the program accordingly. Given the current funding structure for athletics, student support appears the most likely near-term source of increased funding. But in the longer term, once athletics has created momentum on-campus, off-campus sources such as fundraising, ticket sales

and sponsorships also must be significantly increased. If the University cannot successfully marshal this additional support for athletics in the coming years, then the current scope of the program should be reevaluated.

Additional resources also are critical to two other important areas reviewed by the Commission: improving the academic performance and graduation rates of CSUN's student-athletes, and further upgrading the University's athletic competition facilities so they provide a hospitable setting for players and fans alike. Regarding academics, it is a reminder that running a quality intercollegiate athletic program means more than just coaches and players and athletic venues: it means providing the necessary breadth of academic advisors, instructional support and resources to help student-athletes succeed in the classroom, as well as on the field of competition. As for athletic facilities, despite a substantial University investment of more than \$4 million in recent years, much still needs to be done for the University to successfully attract spectators, and supporters, to intercollegiate athletic events on campus.

Overall, the Commission proposes that its recommendations be accomplished in a five to seven year period. During this time, planning should begin for a multipurpose athletic and student recreation center facility on the main campus, one that would benefit all students. The Commission was unanimous in supporting construction of such a facility within the next 10 to 12 years, provided the necessary student fee and donor support is forthcoming.

Throughout the San Fernando Valley and surrounding areas, Cal State Northridge and its countless programs make a major impact. The University long has been, and remains today, the largest provider of higher education in the region. Northridge also is an economic engine that each year graduates some 6,000 students who become the teachers, artists and performers, scientists, engineers, business entrepreneurs and other professionals of our community. Likewise, the University is a cultural center, with hundreds of performances each year and construction forthcoming on campus of a new 1,700-seat Performing Arts Center for the Valley.

In sum, then, the Commission is recommending that Cal State Northridge's Intercollegiate Athletics program likewise needs to become a much more central and visible presence in the life of the University and its community, emerging as the focus of spectator athletic competition for the region. The goal is excellence—for the University, its students and its community.



SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop an action plan for the University to become the sports center—as well as the intellectual, economic and cultural center—for the San Fernando Valley and beyond.
- Intercollegiate Athletics must become a full participant in the life of the University by building closer and stronger connections with students, faculty, staff and alumni.
- Intercollegiate Athletics must build greater campus and community support through enhanced marketing and promotional efforts aimed at both on- and off-campus audiences.
- Additional academic advising/compliance staff is paramount to the program's success.
- An academic center facility for student-athletes should be established as part of athletics.
- Discussions must begin with CSUN students and Associated Students' leadership on their willingness to financially support a true NCAA Division I-level athletics program.
- The Intercollegiate Athletics budget should be a shared responsibility between the University, its students, and the external community. A goal that each sector contribute about one-third of the budget is a reasonable one to achieve within five to seven years.
- Three priority athletic competition facility needs are: enhancing the new soccer venue with permanent bleachers and other upgrades; enhancing the Matadome with expanded seating, new concession space and other spectator-friendly improvements; and enhancing the baseball stadium with a newly graded field and spectator-friendly improvements. These needs should be met through private fund development.
- The University should prepare a long-range plan for future athletic facility needs that includes consideration of a multipurpose athletic and student recreation center facility.
- In hiring new staff, Intercollegiate Athletics should conduct extensive searches with an emphasis on candidates' commitment and background related to compliance, integrity and educational mission.
- Intercollegiate Athletics should recruit student-athletes who have demonstrated a balance between academic and athletic interests.



Goal I: Help Intercollegiate Athletics become a more integral and valued University endeavor that draws greater participation and financial support from students, faculty, staff, alumni and the surrounding region.

Current Status

With an Intercollegiate Athletics program offering 20 men's and women's teams, Cal State Northridge has one of the broadest athletic programs among comparable universities. Yet for many years, Northridge athletics has been an isolated enterprise. As a result, competitive events have not been well attended, fundraising does not have a strong track record, and little is known about the program itself outside of the Athletic Department.

Historically, the broader University community has helped enable this sense of isolation by not considering athletics as an integral part of the academic enterprise. Except for sports coverage in the back of the Daily Sundial student newspaper or recurring concerns about the amount of the Athletic Department budget, many members of the campus community would have little or no awareness of the University's intercollegiate athletics program.

This separation also has been fostered by the Athletic Department's past desire to control all aspects of its activities in isolation from the campus. Little effort has been made to inform or promote the department to students, faculty and staff. As a result, the vast majority of the University's more than 33,000 students have shown little interest in athletic competition, as they commute to the campus, take classes and study, and then leave for home or work.

To change this dynamic, an alternative is required that will unite students, faculty and staff in generating an excitement about Cal State Northridge—in short, the development of a heightened sense of *school spirit*. To achieve such a change on-campus, a shared focus must be developed that can galvanize a significant portion of the campus' population. Experience suggests intercollegiate athletic competition is the campus activity most likely to meet this goal.

A sense of institutional enthusiasm needs to be created on campus by promoting athletics and athletic competition, and by establishing Intercollegiate Athletics as an integral part of the campus. Only by energizing the campus about Cal State Northridge athletics can the Athletic Department extend that enthusiasm and involvement to the surrounding community and region.

Cal State Northridge does have the potential to become the intellectual, economic, cultural and *sports center* of the San Fernando Valley and beyond. But to achieve this vision and maintain a high-quality, broad-based NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletic program, the Athletic Department must build far more significant campus, and then community, levels of involvement and support for its programs.

Key Recommendations

- Develop an action plan for the University to become the sports center—as well as the intellectual, economic and cultural center—for the San Fernando Valley and beyond.
- Intercollegiate Athletics (and its activities) must become a full participant in the life of the University by building closer and stronger connections with students, faculty, staff and alumni.
- Intercollegiate Athletics must build greater campus and community support through enhanced marketing and promotional efforts aimed at both on- and off-campus audiences.

Other Recommendations

To Inform and Energize the Campus Community

- Adjust the image and functions of the Athletic Department to reflect its status as a full participant in the life of the campus. That includes adopting a standard University letterhead (with the inclusion of the athletic logo); coordinating all fundraising, external communication and marketing activities with campus units responsible for similar activities; and adopting business practices that are consistent with other campus units.
- Provide access to information regarding athletics and sports competition that is consistent in format with other University information sources. This should include consistent Web pages that are cross referenced, key placement of athletic events on the main University Web page, and inclusion of athletic events on planned campus electronic messaging signs.
- Partner with Associated Students and the Student Affairs Division in informing students of key games and tournaments to promote attendance. Schedule related events and/or activities that will both inform and generate excitement. Highlight the role of athletes as athletes and students.
- Partner with the University's leadership to promote key games and tournaments among faculty and staff to improve attendance and an understanding of the athletic program. Informational signs in campus locations could inform the campus community about upcoming games, game outcomes and sports standings.
- Work with key campus support departments—Parking Services, Student Housing, the University Corporation, University Student Union and Associated Students—to incorporate a unified, cohesive set of athletics imagery for display on campus. Such elements could include athletic logos, sidewalk inserts, the Matador, flags, signs and school colors.

To Engage the Off-Campus Community

- Work with University Advancement to promote athletics through communications and media strategies to attract community members to games, emphasizing such factors as team success, sports excitement and facility improvements. Employ a full-range of messaging and branding strategies to build excitement, fill the seats, and create value for potential donors and sponsors.
- Partner with the Alumni Association to reach Alumni Association members and other alumni through ongoing association marketing efforts.
- Target initial athletic annual fundraising efforts among community members to support athletic scholarships. Emphasize the relationship between recruitment and success on the field.
- Begin a silent phase of key donor cultivation. Build a nucleus of potential donors who will be able to provide viability in future capital campaigns for new construction or improvements in selected sports venues.
- Investigate the possibility of sponsored signage advertising athletic events, to be located on the edge of campus, in key locations within the campus core and/or in high-traffic areas of the Valley.
- Begin, at an appropriate time, a capital campaign for new construction or major improvements in existing athletics facilities.



Goal II: Evaluate and enhance the academic performance of student-athletes with a focus on improving graduation rates and NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) results.

Current Status

Improving the graduation rates of Cal State Northridge students, especially those who arrive as freshmen, has been one of the University's highest priorities since President Jolene Koester arrived in 2001. The University lags behind the California State University system average for six-year freshmen graduation rates, although the graduation rates of CSUN students who arrive as transfers actually ranks above the CSU average. Even so, the University in recent years has launched a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving graduation rates for all CSUN students, including student-athletes, and has been recognized as a leading institution in efforts to address the graduation rates problem among the state's universities. At Cal State Northridge, recent years' results also have shown some upward movement in graduation rates.

Using the traditional federal methodology for graduation rates, the share of all freshmen who arrived at CSUN in 1998 and were graduated within six years was 36 percent, compared to a comparable freshmen rate of 55 percent at all Division I-AAA schools. In that same cohort, CSUN male students were graduated at the rate of 30 percent, compared to the national Division I-AAA rate of 51 percent for males. CSUN female students were graduated at the rate of 41 percent, compared to the national Division I-AAA rate of 58 percent for females. These data illustrate President Koester's concern.

More striking is the comparison of CSUN student-athletes with those from all Division I-AAA schools. Among those who started as freshmen in 1998, CSUN student-athletes had a six-year graduation rate of 33 percent, which is 29 percentage points below the division's national average (62%). In that same cohort, male student-athletes at CSUN had a 25 percent graduation rate, almost 30 points below the division's national average of 54 percent. CSUN's female student-athlete graduation rate was 42 percent compared to the division's 69 percent rate for female athletes.

In the past year, meanwhile, the NCAA has announced a new method for tracking the graduation rates of all student-athletes called a Graduation Success Rate (GSR). Unlike the federal methodology that the NCAA and many universities feel is not a complete indicator of student-athlete graduation rates, the NCAA's new GSR methodology includes transfer students in calculating student-athlete graduation rates and also makes allowance for student-athletes who transfer to other schools with remaining eligibility.

According to the most recent NCAA data, Cal State Northridge's student-athlete population has a 53 percent Graduation Success Rate. That statistic reflects all counted student-athletes who first came to Cal State Northridge between 1995 and 1998 and ultimately were graduated within six years. (The gender-based GSR rates for CSUN student-athletes were 45 percent for males and 68 percent for females.) In comparison, the NCAA reported a 76 percent national GSR for all Division I student-athletes, 23 percentage points higher than CSUN's average. The national statistic included gender-based rates of 69 percent for males and 86 percent for females. The

NCAA also reported a 79 percent GSR among NCAA Division I-AAA student-athletes, those who come from non-football athletic programs similar to CSUN. Thus, CSUN's Graduation Success Rate lags markedly behind NCAA national averages for other Division I programs, as well as behind the individual GSRs of other Division I institutions in Southern California.

While graduation rate data tracks student-athlete performance over the long term, the NCAA also has instituted a more current measuring system for student-athletes' academic progress that is called an Academic Progress Rate (APR). Under that system, if a team's student-athletes fail to make sufficient semester-to-semester progress, the team could lose athletic scholarship awards. Although the Athletic Department does not expect any CSUN teams to incur such penalties this year, the athletic program's overall APR of 925 does rank below NCAA Division I (950) and Division I-AAA (955) averages, according to the most recent 2003-04 data.

These graduation rates convinced the Commission that enhancing student-athletes' academic support systems should receive a high priority.

Key Recommendations

- Additional academic advising/compliance staff is paramount to the program's success. Staff members who understand the unique needs of student-athletes should be physically located within the Athletic Department. The Commission recommends these staff members be managed by the Athletic Department.
- An academic center facility for student-athletes should be established as part of athletics. This center should be in proximity to Athletic Department administrative and coaches' offices, and would house academic, compliance, and life skills support staff. The facility should include a computer lab, study hall, and tutorial and life skills meeting facilities. The academic center would assist in the retention and graduation of student-athletes, both directly by providing enhanced academic support services, and indirectly, by providing bonding opportunities among student-athletes. The center also would be a valuable recruitment tool for coaches.

Other Recommendations

- Ensure that student-athlete academic advisors, admissions officers, compliance officers, and coaches work in concert to meet the needs of student-athletes, the demands of NCAA and Big West Conference eligibility and compliance requirements, and CSUN academic policies. Academic advisors should attend compliance seminars.
- Hours for advisement should include evenings and other times compatible with student-athletes' schedules. Staff vacation scheduling should accommodate admission, class registration, and the eligibility review calendars. Toward those ends, the reporting lines and job description for academic advisors should be reviewed.

- Develop a method for identifying at risk student-athletes. Academic advisors should meet with student-athletes regularly to keep a pulse on their success and should keep in touch with the professors of at-risk students.
- Improve academic support, such as by providing study halls staffed by tutors and laptop computers for student-athletes when they travel.
- Identify a section of University 100 (the freshman seminar class that helps prepare students to succeed in a university environment) to address the specialized needs of student-athletes.
- Expand the NCAA Champs/Life Skills Program that promotes academic success, a positive and healthy lifestyle, community leadership, and career development. Create graduate assistantships dedicated to enhancing this program and expanding the learning experience for the student-athlete beyond their immediate academic requirements.
- Provide Supplemental Instruction sections (University-provided additional hour-long, once-a-week class sessions with teaching assistants) for courses in which student-athletes often have difficulty.
- Participate in a new state program that will give selected student-athletes financial aid eligibility for summer session attendance.
- Provide financial aid to fifth-year student-athletes who have exhausted athletic eligibility but have a realistic chance of timely graduation.
- Develop academic recognition programs for student-athletes and teams.



Goal III: Evaluate and develop a financial plan that will enable Intercollegiate Athletics to achieve the recommendations of the Commission.

Current Status

To fund “a road map to excellence” in athletics during the coming five years, Cal State Northridge faces a pair of formidable challenges. First, based on a review of athletic spending and revenues among comparable non-football playing schools in the Big West Conference, the current Northridge athletic program generally ranks at or near the bottom in funding, based on many different comparison factors. Those include program revenues per student-athlete, program revenues per team, dollars spent per team, private financial support, and available scholarship funding per student-athlete.

In one such example, Northridge’s athletic program was funded at almost \$18,500 per student-athlete, while Long Beach State athletics was funded at nearly \$26,000 per athlete during 2004-05, according to campus athletic spending reports filed with the federal government. If Northridge athletics were funded at the same per student-athlete level, CSUN’s program would receive more than \$3 million extra per year. So, the first challenge is to bolster funding for the existing Northridge athletics program to help it become more competitive.

Second, the sum of recommendations presented in this report also will require increases in operational and capital expenses for athletics. Thus, the combination of current needs within the existing athletics program and the Commission’s recommendations clearly will necessitate a significant investment of additional resources in the coming years. Without developing a much stronger revenue stream for athletics, CSUN cannot continue to both sponsor its current broad based program and pursue “a road map to excellence.” In other words, maintaining the current athletics program will depend on the department achieving the necessary funding increases.

In assessing funding for CSUN athletics, there are three main sources: the campus General Fund, which contributes about \$4 million-a-year or 60 percent of the \$6.7 million athletics budget; student fees that provide about \$1.9 million or 28 percent, and the remaining nearly \$800,000 or 12 percent from outside revenues. In comparison to Northridge’s peer campuses, the share of CSUN’s athletic budget funded by state dollars is high, while the funding from outside revenues (ticket sales, sponsorships, fundraising, etc.) is exceptionally low. (Actually, the true share of University support for athletics rises to about 65 percent if one includes the extra \$1 million in annual department employee benefit costs that are paid by the campus, but not counted in the department’s budget.)

While increased fundraising and other external support for athletics must be achieved over the long term, those sources are not likely to significantly change in the short term until and unless the University community itself (students, faculty, staff and alumni) markedly raises its involvement in and support for Intercollegiate Athletics.

To put it succinctly, the excitement about Northridge athletics needs to begin at home, and only then can spread to the surrounding community. Given that direct University funding is already at a proportionately high level, it appears that additional student financial support is the most likely near-term source for bolstering a Northridge athletics program that directly involves some 400 student-athletes. Such support would bolster the current athletic program and help it gain the crucial momentum needed to attract greater off-campus financial support in the coming years.

Key Recommendations

- Discussions must begin with CSUN students and Associated Students' leadership on their willingness to financially support a true NCAA Division I-level athletics program.
- The Intercollegiate Athletics budget should be a shared responsibility between the University (General Funds), its students (Associated Students' and Instructionally Related Activities fees), and the external community (sponsorships/event revenues/fundraising). A goal that each sector contribute about one-third of the budget is a reasonable one to achieve within five to seven years.

Other Recommendations

- The Athletic Department should review its business and accounting practices, and develop robust, systematic controls and reporting systems based on transparent business practices.
- The Athletic Department should explore the possibility of increasing the share of athletic facilities rental and licensing revenues that returns to its budget.



Goal IV: Strengthen the competitive position of the Athletic Department and its current sports programs within Division I-AAA of the NCAA and the Big West Conference.

Current Status

For three decades beginning in the 1960s until 1990, Cal State Northridge, originally known as San Fernando Valley State College, was a national power within the NCAA's Division II, where fewer athletic scholarships and other factors result in lower athletic costs to campuses. During this period, the Matadors won 34 national titles and 53 conference championships.

Then in 1990-91, the University raised its institutional commitment to intercollegiate athletics, and the resulting costs and facility demands, by moving its athletic program to the NCAA Division I level. After starting as an independent with no conference affiliation, Northridge later in the decade played in a variety of conference alignments before ultimately in mid-2001 becoming a member of the Big West Conference for most sports and the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) for others. Sixteen of CSUN's 20 teams now compete in the Big West. The other four (men's and women's indoor track, men's volleyball and women's water polo) compete in the MPSF.

In the past five years of competition in NCAA Division I, Northridge athletic teams have had mixed competitive results that clearly have fallen short of the University's past success in Division II. During this period in NCAA Division I, the majority of the University's athletic teams have placed, year-to-year, in the lower half in the Big West Conference rankings.

However, some teams have regularly placed in the top half of their conference in recent years. Athletics' best competitive successes have included men's soccer and track and field, and women's golf, softball, volleyball, and track and field. Men's and women's basketball also have had occasional strong seasons. The men's volleyball team has regularly achieved national rankings, although the team often does not place high in its own conference, because the conference includes the top volleyball programs in the nation.

Based on 2002-03 financial data compiled by the Big West Conference, almost all of Cal State Northridge's men's teams, with the exception of track and field, rank from the mid-range to low end of team spending compared to their conference peers. Northridge women's teams fared better, with team spending generally ranking in the top half compared to their peers, except for two high profile sports, basketball and softball, where team spending was in the middle-lower half.

Considering the Athletic Department's historically limited expense budgets, low levels of ticket sales, sponsorship and other private support revenues, and sports facilities that still have significant unaddressed needs, the University's Intercollegiate Athletic program has competed reasonably well during the past five years. However, the University's athletic programs could anticipate a significant competitive improvement, and become a much more central and visible presence on campus and in the surrounding university, if the University, its students and the community can increase the revenues devoted to athletics, including funds for improved athletic facilities.

Existing athletic facilities and fields

In assessing the competitive position of CSUN athletics, the importance of appropriate athletic facilities for practice, competition, conditioning, administration, and student support cannot be overstated. Members of the Commission's Facilities Subcommittee toured the University's facilities and fields to observe their condition. Subcommittee members were pleased to discover the extent of facilities improvements that have been accomplished in recent years through use of University capital outlay funds. Those projects include:

- Public address system and lighting improvements in the Matadome;
- Construction of a new competition soccer field north of the Kinesiology building;
- Track and field resurfacing and reconstruction, and installation of an electronic scoreboard;
- Softball stadium improvements, including new bleachers;
- Baseball stadium improvements, including new bleachers; and
- Public restrooms to support the baseball, softball, tennis and soccer venues.

Although the campus has spent more than \$4 million during the past five years on upgrading athletic facilities, more investment is needed to address the medium and long-range needs of the various sports. Because of restrictions on the use of state General Funds, future athletic facility improvements will require funding from some combination of student fees and/or private revenues/contributions. Thus increasing attendance at Northridge athletic events becomes imperative if the athletic program is to garner the necessary student and community financial support for such future facility projects.

Key Recommendations

- Three priority athletic competition facility needs are:
 - Enhance the new soccer venue with permanent bleachers and other upgrades;
 - Enhance the Matadome with expanded seating, new concession space and other spectator-friendly improvements; and
 - Enhance the baseball stadium with a newly graded field and spectator-friendly improvements.
 - These needs should be met through private fund development.
- The University should prepare a long-range plan for future athletic facility needs that includes consideration of a multipurpose athletic and student recreation center facility.

Other Recommendations

- Develop priority-based funding allocation standards and indicators to assess teams' progress in meeting their strategic goals.

- Assuming that all facilities are safe and maintained at a minimum level, short-term facilities improvements should occur in a manner that supports the sports competition priorities of the Athletic Department.
- Short-term facilities improvements also should focus on enhancing venue marketing/identification, improving the comfort, convenience, and enjoyment of spectators, and on increasing the potential for revenue generation.
- Explore designating athletic competition facilities to receive an appropriately higher level of maintenance services, in accord with their comparative needs.
- Because facilities upgrades may encourage increased attendance at athletic events, short- and long-range capital improvement plans for athletic facilities should be developed in coordination with University Advancement.
- Improve the coordination of capital planning for athletic facilities among the Athletic Department, the Capital Planning Office, Physical Plant Management and University Advancement.
- Assess future athletic facility projects to avoid unplanned effects on the Kinesiology Department.



Goal V: Assure that Intercollegiate Athletics is built on a foundation of integrity, pride, excellence and quality.

Current Status

As addressed elsewhere in this report, the Commission believes the athletics program at Cal State Northridge, to ultimately succeed, needs to become a more core part of the campus community and culture. Only by doing so can athletics generate the kind of increased campus and community involvement and support necessary to maintain a quality program, one that engenders pride and models excellence. One facet of operating a quality athletics program is the recruitment and retention of athletics staff and student-athletes who are committed to both the academic mission of the University and to compliance with the increasingly complicated rules that govern a NCAA Division I athletics program.

In the past decade, Cal State Northridge athletics sustained two major NCAA violation incidents, one involving the football program during 1998-99 and the other involving men's basketball during 2002-03. As a result, the NCAA placed the University on probation from 2000 through 2003, and then extended that probation, because of the second case, through June 1, 2007. Another major penalty during this time would have disastrous consequences for the Athletic Department. The long-term effect would place the entire athletic program and the recommendations of this Commission in jeopardy. Therefore, maintaining a strong compliance program is critical to the future of Cal State Northridge athletics.

In a different sector, Cal State Northridge and other Cal State campuses have strived in past years to increase the gender equity of their athletic programs. This task has been complicated by the high levels of female student enrollments on many campuses, including at Northridge, combined with recurring cycles of state budget reductions that forced many Cal State campuses to curtail rather than expand their overall athletics offerings. Originally under the mandate of a CSU system-wide consent decree agreement and in more recent years under a voluntary program, Cal State Northridge has made great strides in bringing gender equity to its intercollegiate athletic program. For the first time in 2003-04, Cal State Northridge athletics met its gender equity targets in all three designated areas: student participation, athletic funding and scholarship aid. Gender equity in Intercollegiate Athletics, thus, will continue to be a commitment of the department in the years ahead.

Key Recommendations

- In hiring new staff, Intercollegiate Athletics should conduct extensive searches with an emphasis on candidates' commitment and background related to compliance, integrity and educational mission.
- Intercollegiate Athletics should recruit student-athletes who have demonstrated a balance between academic and athletic interests.

Other Recommendations

- Develop an educational program for staff with emphasis on NCAA rules and regulations.
- Develop an educational and informational program for boosters and appropriate campus faculty, staff, and students.
- Include in Athletic Department staff contracts clauses requiring that staff comply with NCAA, Big West Conference, and institutional rules and regulations. Major violations would be grounds for dismissal.



APPENDIX A

**PRESIDENT'S CHARGE TO THE
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

Fall 2005

Background

Intercollegiate Athletics plays an integral role in the success of the University in achieving its mission and providing a learning-centered environment. In the past two years, California State University, Northridge has launched three key initiatives directed toward mapping the University's future. These are Envision 2035, which is the physical master planning process for the campus; a capital campaign to bring a Valley Performing Arts Center to the University; and a reorientation of all University activities, services, and programs to focus on their role in supporting student learning in order to respond to calls for greater accountability, continuing enrollment demands, and an eroding financial base.

Consistent with these initiatives, it is also essential for Intercollegiate Athletics to develop action plans that can serve as a road map to excellence for the next five years. To achieve this goal, a Blue Ribbon Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics is being established. The Commission is charged with addressing the elements of organization, resources, and personal commitment that the University and Intercollegiate Athletics must have in order to consistently produce a successful NCAA Division I program within the Big West Conference.

Matador athletics has a long and rich history. The department has won 30 NCAA Division II national titles, but has not achieved a comparable level of success since transitioning to Division I during the 1990-91 season. In 1997, in response to concerns about the program's ability to compete effectively at the Division I level, which requires a higher level of compliance and accountability, President Blenda Wilson commissioned a task force to review the future of Intercollegiate Athletics at Cal State Northridge. The recommendations of this study concentrated on the areas of management and administration, athletics conference affiliation and sports offerings, gender equity, budget, facilities, and external issues related to support from the state of California and the California State University system.

Substantial progress has occurred in CSUN's athletics program since that report was prepared: the University's conference affiliation has changed; a five-year strategic plan was developed; gender equity goals have been achieved for the first time; a significant investment of resources has been made to renovate campus intercollegiate athletics facilities; considerable University resources have been invested to develop external funding for the athletics program; and improvements have been made in the kinds of support student athletes receive both in their sports and in their role as students.

Charge

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics is charged to build on the successes of the earlier efforts to enhance Intercollegiate Athletics by developing a road map to excellence for the next five years. Work will begin by the Commission in early September, and it will have representation from key Intercollegiate Athletics stakeholders. Dr. Mo Qayoumi, Vice President for Administration and Finance, to whom Intercollegiate Athletics reports, will serve as chair. The Commission will seek input from major University constituencies throughout its deliberations to form objective and informed opinions. The recommendations of the Commission shall be submitted to the President no later than mid-December 2005. In recognition of the significant role that Intercollegiate Athletics plays in fulfilling the University's mission, Dr. Cedric Dempsey, president emeritus of the NCAA, has agreed to work with the Commission to help produce a set of recommendations that are positive, achievable, and are directed toward building a fiscally sound, academically strong, and competitive Intercollegiate Athletics program at California State University, Northridge.

The Commission is expected to recommend a new comprehensive strategic plan that promotes a sense of pride in the people and the accomplishments of Intercollegiate Athletics. This plan should be built on a foundation of integrity, a quality student-athlete experience, and continuous striving for excellence in the classroom and in competition. The un-prioritized list of topics that shall be reviewed includes, but may not be limited to, the following:

- The competitive position of the department and its current sports within the NCAA Division I and the Big West Conference;
- Financial controls and accountability including appropriate funding levels for the size of the program, sources of funds, and efficacy/transparency of business operations;
- Academic performance of student athletes with a focus on enhancing graduation rates;
- Compliance with Cal/NOW, NCAA, Big West, and University policies and directives;
- Size and condition of practice and competition facilities compared to other similar institutions within the conference;
- Strategies to build support for intercollegiate athletics through marketing and fund-raising efforts, as well as methods/systems of increasing the interest and involvement of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the local community; and
- Performance improvement and the development of indicators to enhance the competitive position of the program, and assess the program's progress in meeting its strategic goals.

APPENDIX B

California State University, Northridge Mission Statement

California State University, Northridge exists to enable students to realize their educational goals. The University's first priority is to promote the welfare and intellectual progress of students. To fulfill this mission, we design programs and activities to help students develop the academic competencies, professional skills, critical and creative abilities, and ethical values of learned persons who live in a democratic society, an interdependent world, and a technological age; we seek to foster a rigorous and contemporary understanding of the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines, and we believe in the following values.

1. **Commitment to Teaching, Scholarship, and Active Learning.** We demonstrate excellence in teaching. We honor and reward high performance in learning, teaching, scholarship, research, service, and creative activity. Because the quality of our academic programs is central to our mission, we encourage intellectual curiosity and protect the multiple expressions of academic freedom.
2. **Commitment to Excellence.** We set the highest standards for ourselves in all of our actions and activities and support the professional development of faculty, staff and administrators. We assess our performance so that every area of University life will be continually improved and renewed. We recognize and reward our efforts of greatest distinction and through them provide state and national leadership.
3. **Respect for All People.** We aspire to behave as an inclusive, cooperative community. Our behaviors, policies, and programs affirm the worth and personal dignity of every member of the University community and contribute to a campus climate of civility, collegiality, tolerance, and reasoned debate.
4. **Alliances with the Community.** We seek partnerships with local schools, community colleges, businesses, government and social agencies to advance the educational, intellectual, artistic, civic, cultural and economic aspirations of our surrounding communities.

Encouragement of Innovation, Experimentation, and Creativity. We seek to provide an environment conducive to innovation, experimentation, and creativity. We encourage all members of our community to take intellectual and creative risks and to embrace changes that will enhance the fulfillment of the University's mission.

California State University, Northridge is inspired by the belief that our commitment to educational opportunity, inclusion and excellence will extend the promise of America to succeeding generations. Our graduates will be the vanguard of leaders for the next century—committed to sustaining a democracy in which diverse people share in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, proficient in applying technology to wise purposes, and dedicated to securing a humane world community and sustaining the bounty of the Earth.

As an institution of higher learning:

We will create a community of shared values in which faculty, students, staff, administrators and alumni will experience personal satisfaction and pride in our collective achievements;

We will be the first choice for university applicants who seek a rigorous, collaborative teaching/learning experience in a technologically rich environment;

We will be the leader in enhancing the educational, cultural and economic resources of our region; and

We will receive local and national recognition for our distinctive achievements in teaching, learning, scholarship and service.

