

President's Charge to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics

California State University, Northridge 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 roadmap 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 for 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.