CCSU Athletics Task Force releases cost-saving recommendations

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NEW BRITAIN, Conn. – In May of 2017, CCSU President Zulma R. Toro formed a task force and charged it with studying the sustainability of the CCSU athletics program. Key elements of the charge were to develop recommendations for how the athletics program can optimally support the following institutional goals: explore how athletics provides a sense of community on campus, enhances CCSU’s relationships with alumni and the local community, enables CCSU to remain an affordable choice, and enhances the academic experience for all CCSU students. Following six months of deliberations by the task force, Central Connecticut State University announced the development and approval of a Blue Devil Athletics Sustainability Plan. Key elements of the plan are:

- To remain a Division I NCAA Program
- To reduce the number of sports from 18 to 16 by the end of the 2018 spring season; the two sports to be eliminated are the Men’s and the Women’s golf programs
- Phase-in changes of approximately $2 million on an annual basis, which includes the elimination of 35.5 scholarships (phased-in to honor existing commitments)
- Require full and partial (above tuition and fees) athletic-scholarship recipients to live on campus
- Implement a formal five-year strategic plan, including a revenue generation campaign
- Conduct an efficiency review, which will include a review of staffing levels and mix of part-time and full-time positions
- Implement a multidisciplinary Advisory Committee to enhance the transparency of the Athletics Program
- Create structural changes in the management of the University and CCSU Foundation, Inc., by eliminating expenses not tied to student success or overall athletic success
- The University will match dollar-for-dollar any Athletic Program donations and sponsorships deposited into the CCSU Foundation, Inc., in excess of the five-year average of $580,000, up to a maximum of $150,000, beginning with State FY 2020
President Toro thanked the Task Force and Dr. Christopher J. Galligan, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, who chaired the task force, for the recommendations. She said, “This is a prudent approach to maintaining the excellent collegiate experience CCSU offers. It will also assure that Blue Devil Athletics can provide our student-athletes distinctive opportunities to pursue excellence in competitive sports and in the classroom. I am especially pleased that these recommendations will also enable Central’s Athletics Program to continue to offer our communities in New Britain and Hartford an exceptional level of sports entertainment.”

“It was not an easy decision by any means, and I’m sure I speak for the rest of the Central Family when I say that we regret that we will be eliminating two sports teams. I sympathize with the student-athletes and the coaches of those teams who will no longer be able to pursue their competitive sports aspirations at CCSU. I appreciate their gracious acceptance. And I thank the students and their coaches for their cooperation.”

Dr. Christopher J. Galligan, Vice President of Institutional Development and Chair of the CCSU Task Force on Athletics Sustainability, said, “Blue Devil Athletics is an important part of the collegiate experience at Central. This plan, with its built-in measures to monitor progress and efficiency in achieving sustainable financing, will enable Central to continue to offer programs of academic and athletic excellence. Of course the loss of two athletics programs affects us all, and I share President Toro’s regrets. But the continuing decline in state funding and the Athletics Program’s increasing dependence on CCSU Foundation funding made it imperative to reduce the University’s expenses in this area. As the Task Force came to recognize during our deliberations, it also became imperative that we restructure some elements of the funding arrangements for the Program. I am confident that these steps will help ensure the Programs’ long-term ability to field very competitive teams and contribute its distinctive value to our students, the campus community, and the communities CCSU embraces.”

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