Central Connecticut State University (CCSU)  
Task Force for the Sustainability of the CCSU Athletics Program  
Frequently Asked Questions  
January 22, 2018

Media Inquiries: Dr. Mark McLaughlin, Associate Vice President, Marketing & Communications, 860-832-0065, McLaughlinM@ccsu.edu

1. Who were the members of the task force?

The following individuals were appointed by President Toro:

Charlene Casamento, Chief Financial Officer
Carol Ciotto, Associate Professor of Physical Education & Human Performance
Mick D’Arcy, Head Women’s Soccer Coach
Chris Galligan, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Task Force Chair
Scott Hazan, Director, Student Activities/Leadership Development
Princess Livingston, Head Women’s Lacrosse Coach
Brittany Mendelson, Student Representative, Women’s Cross Country and Track & Field
Jailene Nazario, Student Representative, Student Government Association, Senator
John Patrick, Chairman, President and CEO of Farmington Savings Bank
Paul Resetarits, Professor of Manufacturing & Construction Management and Faculty Athletics Representative
Jason Snyder, Associate Dean of the School of Business
Amy Strickland, Associate Athletics Director of Compliance and Senior Women's Administrator
Robert Wolff, Professor of History

2. What was the purpose of the task force (charge)?

On May 22, 2017, President Zulma R. Toro formed a task force and charged this group with studying the sustainability of the CCSU athletics program. Key elements of the charge, consistent with the University priorities of community engagement, enrollment management, and revenue generation, were as follows:

1. Maintain academic excellence.
2. Develop a greater sense of community on campus.
3. Enhance CCSU’s relationships with alumni and the local community.
4. Enable CCSU to remain an affordable choice.
5. Enhance the academic experience for all CCSU students.

3. What major issues were examined?

The issues below are consistent with the overall charge of the task force:

1. Does/will CCSU have the resources necessary to sustain a Division I athletics program and the additional services required (i.e., sports medicine, strength and conditioning, and academic support, etc.)?
2. What is the optimal structure for athletics that will improve overall operations and decrease financial reliance on the University (i.e., subsidy)?
3. How can athletics be leveraged to enhance progress toward University priorities of academic excellence, community engagement, enrollment management, and revenue generation?

4. What alternatives were discussed?

The task force considered many alternatives. Discussions included maintaining the status quo, conference affiliation, and the elimination of athletics (focusing instead on club, intramural, and recreational sports).

1. Remain at the Division I level and reduce the number of sports sponsored.
2. Move to Division II and maintain all 18 sports.
3. Move to Division II and reduce the number of sports.
4. Move to Division III.
5. What was the recommendation of the task force?

The task force recommended that CCSU remain at the Division I level and reduce the number of sports. Along with the reduction of sports, the task force recommended additional economic and structural changes. It was the opinion of the task force that this course of action best supports the strategic goals of CCSU: increasing student enrollment, maintaining academic excellence, expanding community engagement, and developing additional sources of revenue.

6. Why was the decision made to stop supporting men’s and women’s golf?

The decision to no longer support certain sports was difficult. The finances of the sports were examined as was overall contribution to University priorities. Based on this evaluation, the decision was made to eliminate men’s and women’s golf.

NEC priority sports were also examined. Men’s and women’s golf are not deemed priority sports.

7. What services will be available to the students impacted?

The Department of Athletics, specifically the Compliance Office staff, will work with each of the affected student athletes to communicate the transfer and eligibility process, should they wish to leave CCSU.

The Athletics Wellness Center will also be available to the student athletes.

8. Was consideration given to dropping football?

Yes. All sports were discussed at great length. Regarding football, it was concluded that its impact on enrollment (both scholarship and non-scholarship athletes) as well as the potential for impacting student activities and community engagement was too great to eliminate. It is also important to note that many of our students have a direct impact in participating in football, including but not limited to the band, cheerleaders and the dance team. The football program is also instrumental in revenue generation, including alumni relations and fundraising.

9. Were Northeast Conference (NEC) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) policies and procedures considered?

Yes. Both NEC and NCAA policies and procedures were discussed. The economic impact of the alternatives referenced was of particular interest.

10. What were some of the reasons for maintaining Division I status?

There are many advantages to maintaining Division I status. Opportunities for revenue generation, through the scheduling of guaranteed games, will remain. NCAA revenue will continue to be received (although reduced over time). By maintaining Division I status and NEC membership, CCSU avoids paying a conference exit fee. Revenue generating activities, such as fundraising, should not be adversely impacted and could conceivably increase. The stature associated with being a Division I program remains, possibly enhancing student engagement and campus life. As the only Division I program within the CSUS System, that status contributes to CCSU’s position in the System and the State and is a source of pride and school spirit for many internal and external constituents.

Moving to Division II and/or Division III presented some challenges. CCSU would have to be invited to join a conference prior to beginning the transition process. In addition, CCSU would incur a fee to leave the NEC as well as a reduction in NCAA revenue. Enrollment could be negatively impacted as existing and potential student-athletes might seek Division I opportunities elsewhere.

11. Did Title IX play a role in any of the decision making?

Yes, Title IX was considered throughout deliberations and will play a role in scholarship reductions.

12. What is the financial impact of all the changes?

The financial impact of the changes is $2,000,000 annually (when all the recommendations are fully implemented).

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has the opportunity to aggressively engage in various revenue generating activities, with up to $150,000 of the private funds being matched by the University.
13. Will current scholarships be honored?

The elimination of scholarships will be phased-in to honor commitments made to existing student athletes who currently receive these scholarships.

14. Is there the potential for other sports to be dropped in the future?

Two of the recommendations address future economic and structural changes: implement a multidisciplinary Advisory Committee to enhance the transparency of the Athletics Program and implement a formal five-year strategic plan, including a fundraising/revenue generation campaign.

The Advisory Committee will review CCSU Athletics on a regular basis, and may recommend additional changes later.

15. When will the search for an Athletic Director begin?

The search should begin shortly after the task force recommendations are made public. The anticipated start date is July 1, 2018 (if not sooner).

16. What steps were taken to ensure that the taskforce received feedback from the campus community?

1. Open meeting with students was held on Monday, October 9, 2017.
2. Open meeting with faculty and staff was held on Thursday, September 28, 2017.
3. Meeting with the Alumni Association Sports Committee was held on Wednesday, August 30, 2017.
4. E-mail to campus community soliciting suggestions, questions, or comments was distributed on Thursday, June 8, 2017.
5. Individual meetings with alumni, coaches, faculty members, staff members, and students have occurred since the formation of the task force.
6. Additionally, the taskforce received a petition from student-athletes, favoring Division I status, on October 20, 2017.