

REPORT OF THE
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS
TASK FORCE

Submitted to Chancellor
Vaughn Vandegrift
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Introduction

Intercollegiate athletics has been a vibrant part of the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) community since 1967. Numerous accomplishments have occurred since that time including national success in men's and women's team sports, individual sport championships, and many cases of outstanding academic performance of student-athletes. In 2006, SIUE finished fourth in the U.S. Sports Academy Directors Cup rankings of the best NCAA Division II athletic programs.

In September 2005, Chancellor Vaughn Vandegrift appointed a Task Force to help envision the future of intercollegiate athletics at SIUE. Members of the IATF represented various constituencies of the university and external community. The IATF members are listed in Appendix A. In reviewing the mission of intercollegiate athletics, the level of competition, programmatic resources, and financial resources, the specific charge of the Intercollegiate Athletics Task Force (IATF) was to review:

- Mission: Determine the rationale and define the value for any necessary changes within the context of SIUE's mission, vision, values, and goals.
- Levels: Review the following options;
 - Division II: Continue to strengthen the existing Intercollegiate Athletics program to become the very best at this level utilizing the present tiering system, with special emphasis on tier four that includes wrestling and men's golf (both of these programs are externally funded).
 - Division I: Consider transitioning from a Division II level to a Division I level with both the appropriate level of financial resources as well as the necessary facilities to be competitive to achieve national recognition.
 - Division I/Division II Hybrid: Remain at the Division II level, but move two key programs into a Division I level (as allowed by the NCAA) with the appropriate resources and consistent with NCAA/GLVC policies.
- Programmatic Resources: Determine the additional personnel, improved and/or expanded facilities, scholarship and operating enhancements, and estimated costs to meet the needs of each option.
- Financial Resources: Determine the financial resources including increases in student fees and/or a comprehensive fund raising effort, as well as revenue generation to meet the needs of each option.

Chancellor Vandegrift asked the IATF to consider the following values in carrying out their charge:

- Student-Athlete's Academic Welfare: We must protect, preserve and promote academic achievement that is above the national norms.
- Student-Athlete's Personal Welfare: We must support in and out of class needs for personal enrichment and development.
- Character: We must remain committed to personal integrity and the promotion of ethical development.
- Competitive: We must be competitive in an appropriate conference as well as at the national level.
- Title IX: We must remain committed not only to the letter of the law, but also to the spirit and intent of Title IX.
- Conference: We must protect and preserve our academic and competitive integrity by seeking membership in the appropriate conference.

Task Force Methods of Inquiry

The IATF began its deliberations on September 20, 2005. It was clear from the outset that there was considerable variation in members' familiarity with intercollegiate athletics. Given the wide range of familiarity, the task force adopted a method of inquiry that would first lead to a common level of understanding of the status of intercollegiate athletics in the United States, especially intercollegiate athletics organized under the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), then a review of the status of intercollegiate athletics at SIUE.

To accomplish those learning goals and to fulfill its charge of reviewing alternative scenarios for the future, the IATF consulted a number of resources. To better understand the internal goals and operations of intercollegiate athletics at SIUE, the IATF consulted documents and people to learn about:

- the history, accomplishments, evolution of athletics at SIUE;
- how the current tiered structure of athletics emerged;
- intercollegiate athletics budgets including expenses and funding sources;
- NCAA compliance performance;
- Gender Equity performance;
- the adequacy of facilities;
- attendance at athletic events;
- student athletes' academic profile;

- University Planning & Budget Council;
- Academics at SIUE.

A number of people provided valuable assistance by either meeting with task force or by providing appropriate documentation. Those individuals included Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics Dr. Brad Hewitt, Assistant Director of Athletics/Senior Women's Administrator Sandy Montgomery, Academic Advisor Jaci Declue, Associate Provost David Sill, and Chair of the University Planning and Budget Council Dr. Radcliffe Edmonds.

To understand the status of intercollegiate athletics in the United States, especially the experience of universities that have recently reclassified their status from NCAA Division II to NCAA Division I, the IATF consulted a number of resources including:

- NCAA membership information and research reports;
- Reports of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics;
- Visits and interviews with officials of universities that reclassified from NCAA Division II to NCAA Division I;
- Interviews with NCAA Division I conference officials.

Again, a number of individuals graciously provided their time and valuable information including: NCAA Director of Division II Terri Steeb; Kennesaw State University Athletic Director Dr. Dave Waples; Horizon League Conference Commissioner Jonathan LeCron; Mid-Continent Conference Commissioner Tom Douple; Missouri Valley Conference Commissioner Doug Elgin; and, Ohio Valley Conference Commissioner Jon Steinbrecher.

To facilitate research and information processing, the IATF organized into four subcommittees. The four committees investigated conference affiliations, academic issues at SIUE, SIUE facilities, and athletic program expenses. Each committee's findings were reviewed and discussed by the entire IATF.

Assimilation of all the information gathered by the IATF and the Committees began after committee reports were finalized. During the IATF's discussions, there was a realization that the core values that Chancellor Vandegrift had presented to the IATF were clearly influencing deliberations. Further, the IATF recognized that it had informally adopted some principles or heuristics that guided its discussions. The IATF articulated those principles in a document that is included in Appendix B.

There was a strong sense of collaboration within the IATF. The findings of the IATF, thus, represent a collective effort and go beyond the viewpoint or perspective of its individual members. This document, including the outcome summary table, is the result of collaborative work of the entire IATF.

The draft report was created and posted to the web for public review. Information sessions were held with various university constituency groups including Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government, Athletic Staff and Intercollegiate Athletic Committee. Student Athletic Advisory Committee Open meetings were held for faculty, staff, students and community members. Appendix D includes dates, times and locations for each of the meetings followed by summaries of comments from each meeting. Appendix E includes letters and emails received by the Task Force. Appendix F includes a transcript of on line discussions among SIUE students on Facebook.com.

Findings

An outcome table summarizing the IATF's findings is presented in Appendix C.

The table illustrates the three scenarios under review and a group of variables representing likely costs (operations, facilities, administrative costs associated with reclassification, academics, gender equity, impact on other SIUE departments, and recruitment of student athletes) and potential benefits (enrollment, media exposure/marketability, student engagement, student athlete engagement, fund raising/alumni relations, program integrity/compliance, enhanced athletic rivalries, community perception, reputation/recognition/image) under each scenario.

Potential costs are estimates based on our ability to project costs from discussions with university personnel, reviews of financial reports, and experience of the IATF members. It is important to note that, while we believe those estimates to be reasonable, they are subject to the same factors that influence any cost estimates, most notably the factors of time (costs will likely increase as time passes) and changes in decision parameters (e.g., a 10,000 seat arena will likely cost more than an 8,000 seat arena).

Potential benefits were much more difficult to quantify. The IATF struggled with the question of how to measure potential benefits, for example, of enhanced alumni relations. Do enhanced alumni relations follow from a move to NCAA Division I? To what extent does program success

influence the "warmth" of those relations? Is the change in relations worth the cost of the move to Division I or could the same outcome be achieved by allocating resources to different activities? Those and other questions occupied the attention of the IATF as it deliberated the benefits of the three different scenarios. The outcomes reported by the IATF are influenced by current research on the issues, and by our distillation of anecdotal evidence from various sources. That approach resulted in many more conditional findings than we anticipated. However, the IATF felt it was of utmost importance that the report neither overestimate nor underestimate the potential effects of changes to intercollegiate athletics based on the three scenarios.

Appendices

Appendix A - Members of the Intercollegiate Athletic Task Force

Appendix B - Intercollegiate Athletics Task Force Guiding Principles

Appendix C - Summary Findings of Costs and Benefits Under Three Future Scenarios

Appendix D - Summaries of Constituency and Open Meetings

Appendix E - Letters and Emails

Appendix F - Transcript of on line discussion Facebook.com