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2009-2014

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS PLAN

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Intercollegiate Athletics Plan 2009-2014

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

This plan has been developed to guide the establishment and growth of an intercollegiate athletics program at SUNY-ESF during the period 2009-2014. The College has offered undergraduate students the opportunity to participate in several intercollegiate club level sports in recent years, and will build upon that experience in moving its athletics program to a fully intercollegiate level, including institutional membership in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

The development of a wider range of intercollegiate athletic opportunities, coupled with institutional membership in the NAIA, is expected to provide benefits to the College and its students in the following areas:

* **Student Development** - Student participation in athletics will provide opportunities to develop teamwork and leadership skills along with physical fitness, recreation, sportsmanship, self-awareness and community involvement.
* **Student Activities** – Our athletics program will provide social opportunities for spectators in addition to the student development opportunities provided to participants.
* **School Spirit** - Our athletics program will enhance school spirit and alumni involvement and help to build institutional pride and identity.
* **Visibility** - Our athletics program will help to generate media coverage and increase the College’s visibility and reputation.
* **Student Recruitment and Retention** - The availability of intercollegiate athletics is a significant factor in the college selection process for many outstanding student-athletes who seek the quality education ESF provides. Athletics can also contribute to student retention and degree completion.

While the benefits of an intercollegiate athletics program at ESF will be substantial, we recognize that the development of a comprehensive program will not be easy to accomplish. The success of this strategic initiative requires a careful examination of the College’s potential to identify appropriate funding and facilities, to gain athletic association membership, to implement athletics related policies and procedures, and to establish an appropriate selection of athletic teams. Each of these areas is examined in more detail in this plan.

ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Institutional membership in a nationally recognized athletic association is a prerequisite to the development of any intercollegiate athletics program beyond the club sport level of competition. Since athletic association membership provides a regulatory framework for intercollegiate competition, ESF’s choice of athletic association is a strategic choice that impacts subsequent decisions related to program funding, facilities, and competition.

In 2008, the College completed a comparative analysis of the requirements and benefits associated with institutional membership in the two most widely recognized collegiate athletic associations for four year colleges, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). This analysis showed that the NAIA was clearly the most appropriate association for ESF to affiliate with, based on the College’s size and available resources. In July 2009, SUNY-ESF proceeded to apply for institutional membership in the NAIA. Membership approval was granted by the NAIA Council of Presidents at their September 2009 meeting, allowing the College to compete as an NAIA member institution beginning spring or fall semester of 2010 if the College’s Intercollegiate Athletics Plan is approved.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL OF ATHLETICS

The NAIA requires each college president to assume responsibility for the institutional control of intercollegiate athletics and recommends that each president establish a faculty athletics committee to provide advice and consultation in the development of athletic policies.

The State University of New York policy on Intercollegiate Athletics (Policy Document #3000) provides for the formation of an Intercollegiate Athletics Board (IAB) on each state supported campus to monitor, review and recommend policies for intercollegiate athletics and to advise the campus president. The IAB also has the responsibility for developing the annual intercollegiate athletics budget and recommending it to the campus president for approval. Additional information pertaining to IAB duties and member requirements can be found on the SUNY website at [www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc\_id=50/](http://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=50/)

In March 2009, President Cornelius B. Murphy, Jr. appointed the following individuals to serve on the SUNY-ESF Intercollegiate Athletics Board:

* Ryan Henry (ESF student and non-athlete representative approved by ESF’s Student Government Association).
* Adam Lavelle (ESF student and male athlete representative).
* Jessica Haerter (ESF student and female athlete representative).
* Heidi Busa (Alumni representative).
* Russell Briggs (Designated Faculty Athletics Representative for NAIA).
* Cheryl Doble (Faculty representative).
* Allan Drew (Faculty representative).
* John View (Administration representative).
* Robert French (Administration representative and acting chair).

These Board members have been appointed to staggered terms and will be reappointed or replaced with new members as needed.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS POLICIES

SUNY-ESF has approved a number of athletics related policies and procedures that will be in effect as the College implements an NAIA approved intercollegiate program. These policies and procedures are outlined in our 2009-2010 Intercollegiate Athletics Handbook, which is available on the Web at <http://www.esf.edu/students/sports/> . The following policies are among the most important as the College proceeds with the ongoing development of an intercollegiate program:

* ESF’s intercollegiate athletics program is built on a firm commitment to supporting the academic mission of the College, with the understanding that student-athletes are, first and foremost, students. Student-athletes at ESF are expected to meet the same academic and student life standards expected for all undergraduate students.
* Student-athletes are admitted to ESF using the same admissions standards used to admit non-athletes. ESF is among the most selective institutions in SUNY, and will remain so.
* ESF does not offer athletics scholarships to student-athletes and has no plans to do so. The College offers a variety of need-based grants and academic merit-based scholarships, with eligibility determined on an individual student basis. Athletes and non-athletes are awarded financial aid and scholarships using the same award criteria and the same renewal criteria. Our financial aid programs and policies comply with NAIA regulations, as well as NCAA Division III regulations and the financial aid policies established by the State University of New York.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

SUNY-ESF has no athletic facilities of its own at this time. Our intercollegiate club teams practice and compete on fields provided through the Department of Recreation Services and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Syracuse University. Access to Syracuse University athletic facilities is provided for through a broader inter-institutional agreement that provides ESF student access to a variety of academic and student life facilities at SU. ESF student access to Syracuse University athletic facilities is, however, limited by scheduling considerations that give priority use to Syracuse University teams and activities.

The possibilities for ESF to expand its intercollegiate sports program are severely limited due to our lack of facilities, and this will be an overriding factor in the selection of the individual and team sports that the College will sponsor in the future. Our athletic facilities options would include four possible pathways at this time:

* The College could seek additional access to Syracuse University athletic facilities. The University’s facilities for volleyball, tennis, swimming and outdoor track may have the capacity to support ESF teams most easily, and are options that deserve additional exploration. It is possible that gaining greater access to Syracuse University facilities would require a negotiated agreement to include some type of usage fee.
* The College could seek access to athletic facilities at other colleges or schools in the Syracuse area. Facilities at LeMoyne College, Onondaga Community College, or area high schools could potentially be available. These options would almost certainly require a negotiated agreement and usage fees. The location of off-campus facilities would present additional issues.
* The College could potentially contract for special access to athletic facilities that are open to the general public. Examples would include bowling or skiing facilities, or the use of privately owned recreation centers and athletic fields. Location and costs would be primary considerations for these options.
* The College could develop its own athletic facilities on or near campus. A small gymnasium could, for example, allow ESF to develop future teams in basketball and volleyball, while also providing space for College events such as Convocation. A cross country running trail and a “game field” for intercollegiate soccer could be developed on College property in Tully NY. Locker room facilities could be provided as part of a student fitness center under consideration as a component of the College’s new Gateway Building (scheduled for completion in 2011).

Our plan for 2010-11 is to focus on gaining additional access to Syracuse University facilities, and we are in ongoing discussions with SU’s Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and Director of Recreation Services on this topic. This is a priority item for our men’s and women’s soccer teams, who are most dependent on Syracuse University facilities. Our golf team will continue to contract with a local golf course to meet facility needs, and will play most matches at other colleges. Our men’s and women’s cross country teams will schedule all their competition at other colleges and will travel to those competition locations. Our Office of Athletics has identified a privately operated sports center in the local area that could provide outdoor soccer facilities through a contract if the College is not able to gain greater access to Syracuse University fields. The College is also exploring the potential to develop a soccer field on College property located in Tully NY by fall 2011 or fall 2012.

Our longer term plan for athletic facilities is to identify and use an appropriate mix of ESF, Syracuse University, and contracted facilities to fit our specific selection of athletic teams. Available facilities will continue to be a driving factor in decisions to develop any additional intercollegiate teams.

ADDITIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAMS

This Intercollegiate Athletics Plan calls for the addition of up to five new intercollegiate teams at SUNY-ESF by the year 2014. That would increase the College’s total number of sports teams to ten. Our selection of additional teams will depend heavily upon a careful analysis of projected program costs, available sports facilities, prospective student interests, and current student interests.

If this plan is approved, our strategy for the upcoming 2010-11 academic year would be to immediately elevate ESF’s existing club-level team in timber sports (Woodsmen’s Team) to full intercollegiate status as the College’s sixth intercollegiate team. We would follow that with the addition of a yet to be determined seventh sports team that would be organized by the winter or spring of 2011. Current ESF students will be asked to indicate their interest in a range of possible new teams as part of a planned fall 2009 student referendum on intercollegiate athletics, and that information will be an important factor in our selection of any new teams.

PROGRAM FUNDING

The planned operating expenditures for intercollegiate athletics at SUNY-ESF total $66,300 for the 2009-10 academic year. This includes $26,300 in salary expenses, $8,000 in benefits costs, and $32,000 in operating expenses to support five intercollegiate club-level teams (men’s and women’s soccer, men’s and women’s cross country, and golf). A club team that competes in traditional timber sports (the ESF Woodsmen’s Team) is funded separately by the Undergraduate Student Association and supervised by the College’s Office of Student Life at this time.

A full intercollegiate athletics program will require a significantly larger budget to cover increased costs for NAIA membership fees, mandatory insurance coverage for student-athletes, a greater number of athletic teams with increased team travel and equipment expenditures, coach and administrator salaries, and potential costs for the rental of appropriate athletic facilities. It is critical for the program to secure a stable source of funding and an adequate level of funding to allow for our desired expansion of athletic opportunities at ESF.

SUNY policies covering Intercollegiate Athletics (Policy Document #3000) and Fees (Policy Document #7804) indicate that revenue in support of a campus intercollegiate athletics program may be assigned from state appropriations, from private donations, from a student activity fee, from an intercollegiate athletics fee, and from funds generated by activities directly related to the intercollegiate athletics program (e.g. tickets sales, concessions, etc.). While any of these funding sources could contribute to the College’s efforts to fund an expanded program, we believe that a mandatory student fee to support intercollegiate athletics offers the greatest potential to secure stable and adequate funding.

The SUNY Board of Trustees has established specific policies and procedures for the approval, collection, and use of campus-based fees for intercollegiate athletics, which are managed under the auspices of the Income Fund Reimbursable (IFR) Program. The fee establishment procedures indicate that the following steps would be required for ESF to gain approval for a mandatory intercollegiate athletics fee:

1. The campus president must submit a fee proposal to the SUNY Chancellor detailing the plan for a consultative process that will be used to gather campus input regarding the potential implementation of the fee. This plan must be broadly based and may include consultation with the Intercollegiate Athletics Board, faculty and student governance organizations, the campus council or board of trustees, campus-wide hearings or polls. An undergraduate student referendum, conducted in accordance with the plan proposed by the president, must be one element of the required consultation process.
2. The Chancellor must approve the plan for the campus consultative process, and the campus must implement that process.
3. Upon completion of the consultative process, the campus president must show evidence of campus support for an intercollegiate athletics fee based on the results of the process, including the conduct of a student referendum. The president must specify the initial amount of the fee (including a pro rata application for part-time students) and make an official request to the Chancellor to establish the fee. The request must include documentation of the establishment of an Intercollegiate Athletics Board, along with the assurance that all funds derived from the athletic fee will be managed through an IFR account.

The specific charge for an ESF intercollegiate athletics fee has not been determined, and cannot be determined prior to conducting the required consultative process on campus. This Intercollegiate Athletics Plan contains a five year capital plan projecting ESF’s athletic expenditures and revenues for 2009-2014 based on the assumption that ESF will be approved to implement a mandatory athletic fee for undergraduate students that will range from $70 to $100 per year. The SUNY Intercollegiate Athletics Policy (#3000) requires that ESF submit this capital projection to the Chancellor as part of the planning process to establish a new intercollegiate program. The proposed $70 to $100 athletics fee has been based on preliminary discussions with ESF’s President, student government and Intercollegiate Athletics Board, and will provide the basis for furthering the consultative process on campus. We expect to conclude the consultative process, including a required student referendum, in time to implement this fee in fall 2010 if approved.

A mandatory athletics fee of $70 per year ($35 per semester) charged to undergraduate students would generate a projected $105,000 in revenue to support ESF’s intercollegiate athletics program. A mandatory fee of $100 per year ($50 per semester) would generate a projected $150,000 per year. We believe that an approved athletics fee in the $70 to $100 range would provide sufficient revenue to realistically support seven to ten intercollegiate teams.

Comparative research indicates that mandatory athletic fees are currently used by at least 19 of SUNY’s four-year colleges, and that those fees average $336 per year for the 2009-10 academic year. These fees range from $220 per year at SUNY Binghamton to $479 per year at SUNY Albany. The 19 campuses each support from 9 to 23 intercollegiate teams, with the average currently at 17 teams per campus. ESF’s proposed athletics fee would be the smallest in SUNY, and our number of planned intercollegiate sports would also be among the smallest in SUNY.

Our proposed Operating Revenues and Expenditures Plan for SUNY-ESF Intercollegiate Athletics 2009-14 is included on the following page. This plan indicates that the College is capable of supporting an intercollegiate athletics program consisting of up to ten teams if a proposed $100 per year athletics fee is approved. An alternative plan to support only seven intercollegiate teams will be implemented if a $70 athletics fee is approved. The athletics program will remain at its current five team level if the proposed athletics fee is not approved, or if the College’s five year plan for the expansion of intercollegiate athletics is not approved.

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| **OPERATING REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES PLAN (000)** |
| **FOR SUNY-ESF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS 2009 - 14** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **NUMBER OF ATHLETIC TEAMS** | **5** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **OPERATING REVENUES** | **$66.3** | **$152.0** | **$153.0** | **$154.0** | **$155.0** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| State Appropriations | 34.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Student Activity Fee | 32.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Merchandise Sales | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Restricted Gifts | 0.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 4.0 |
| Athletics Fee | 0.0 | 150.0 | 150.0 | 150.0 | 150.0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **OPERATING EXPENDITURES** | **$66.3** | **$112.0** | **$133.0** | **$150.0** | **$155.0** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Salaries PT Coaches | 9.5 | 17.0 | 22.0 | 27.0 | 32.0 |
| Salaries Administration | 16.8 | 22.2 | 22.8 | 23.4 | 24.0 |
| HR Benefit Cost | 8.0 | 11.1 | 11.4 | 11.7 | 12.0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Team Travel | 13.0 | 23.0 | 28.0 | 33.0 | 38.0 |
| Team Equipment | 2.5 | 6.0 | 8.0 | 10.0 | 11.5 |
| Officials/Trainers | 1.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 6.0 | 7.0 |
| Facilities/Contracts | 6.0 | 14.0 | 19.0 | 20.0 | 11.0 |
| General/Office | 0.7 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Athletics Recruiting | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| Athletics Grants | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| NAIA Membership | 5.4 | 8.1 | 9.0 | 9.4 | 9.5 |
| NAIA Insurance | 2.4 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **CAPITAL EQUIPMENT** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$60.0** | **$0.0** |
|  (Athletic Vans) |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ANNUAL SUPPLUS** | **$0.0** | **$40.0** | **$20.0** | **-$56.0** | **$0.0** |
| **CUMULATIVE SURPLUS** | **$0.0** | **$40.0** | **$60.0** | **$4.0** | **$4.0** |

 PROPOSED TRUSTEE RESOLUTION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Whereas the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry has developed a successful program of club-level athletics for the benefit of ESF students, and

Whereas the College has determined that a varsity-level intercollegiate athletics program will provide additional benefits and opportunities for student development, campus activities, school spirit, media visibility, and student recruitment and retention, let it be

RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees endorses the concepts and general direction of the College’s Intercollegiate Athletics Plan 2009-14 as presented and discussed, including the further exploration and implementation of a mandatory athletics fee for undergraduate students for the purpose of providing appropriate revenues to support the Plan.