

## Student-Athletes Briefing

### BACKGROUND

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (Athletics) at Oregon State University (OSU) focuses on the holistic development of its 500+ student-athletes by providing opportunities for them to develop their leadership through academic and athletic achievement in a progressive and inclusive environment of mutual respect.

Certified by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), OSU participates in the NCAA Division I Bowl Championship Subdivision (FBS) as a member of the Pac-12 Conference (Pac-12). The university sponsors 17 varsity sports (baseball, men's & women's basketball, women's cross country, football, men's & women's golf, women's gymnastics, men's & women's rowing, men's & women's soccer, softball, women's indoor and outdoor track & field, women's volleyball and wrestling). As a member of the NCAA, Athletics is governed by the NCAA and the Pac-12, and all institutions classified in the FBS must meet all the Division I membership requirements set forth in NCAA Division I bylaws.

### ATHLETICS AT OSU

As a member of the Pac-12, Athletics subscribes to the philosophy of achieving regional and national excellence and prominence for all of its programs. Beyond serving its 500+ student-athletes by providing opportunities for participation in intercollegiate sports, Athletics also serves the greater university community by maintaining and promoting the educational achievements of student-athletes and upholding the academic integrity of the institution as a whole.

In February 2018, Athletics unveiled a five-year strategic plan that includes six strategic goals. Each of the goals reflect the mission of the department, which is to Build, Excellent, Authentic, Visionary Student-Athletes by being builders, being excellent, being authentic and being visionary with student-athletes at the core of everything we do (GO B.E.A.V.S!).

The six strategic goals are:

- 1) Lead the country in holistic student-athlete development, measured by graduation, academic achievement, student-athlete wellness and post-graduation success;
- 2) Win championships, achieve post-season success and attain national recognition annually in all sports;
- 3) Generate the funds necessary to accomplish our strategic goals and align resources to achieve financial sustainability;
- 4) Demonstrate inclusive excellence by advancing diversity and equity in all that we do;
- 5) Activate Beaver Nation through strategic partnerships with our campuses, our community, the Beaver State and the world;
- 6) Invest in the facilities and infrastructure necessary to compete at the highest level.

## **SPECIAL INITIATIVES & PROJECTS**

To advance the strategic initiatives of Athletics and the university as a whole, the department has prioritized the following actions.

### **Strategic Plan Implementation Tracking and Accountability**

Athletics is guided by the multiple objectives identified in its comprehensive strategic plan. For each objective identified, there are specific strategies, actions, and metrics identified to ensure the objective is met. Athletics has developed tracking tools for monitoring the implementation of each action item over the course of the strategic plan.

### **Student-Athlete Support and Wellness Programming**

The university funds the Office of Academics for Student-Athletes (ASA), a unit that provides academic and personal support to all student-athletes. ASA's goal is to provide all student-athletes with the opportunity to achieve their potential for intellectual, social, and personal development, and to create a collaborative environment with other university departments to help student-athletes integrate into the OSU community. In order to maintain the highest level of alignment between ASA and Athletics, the ASA director also serves as associate athletic director and works with all relevant Athletics personnel. The ASA team includes academic counselors and specialists to assist student-athletes with time management, study sessions, tutorials, and other forms of support. Academic counselors provide one-on-one support for student-athletes, monitor their academic performance and act as a liaison with campus resources such as the Academic Success Center.

The university also offers incoming student-athletes the BEST Summer Bridge Program to support their successful transition into the university's academic environment through learning skills development, academic course credit, and orientation programs.

OSU's student-athletes performed very well during the past quarter (winter 2019). Sixteen of the 17 programs have a 3.0+ cumulative OSU GPA while 96% of the overall student-athlete population is in good standing. Within the population, 67% received a 3.0+ term GPA, 32% received a 3.5+ term GPA, and 9% received a 4.0 term GPA. Additionally, 25% earned Honor Roll status.

As with all students, overall wellness impacts the academic achievement of our student-athletes. Student-athlete wellness is one of the priority efforts identified in the department's strategic plan. Athletics is implementing numerous efforts to address student-athlete wellness, which are described in further detail in the Threats and Opportunities section of this briefing, including the successful launch of a comprehensive student-athlete alumni mentorship program for all teams which links former student-athletes with current student-athletes. This program allows for current student-athletes to learn from successful former student-athletes how they navigated their own personal transition from being a student to being a successful adult.

### **Financial Sustainability Plan**

Athletics continues to make progress on the implementation of the Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) presented to the Board in January 2017. Implementation of the FSP has been impacted

by changes in the federal tax code regarding seat-related giving and season tickets. These changes have forced Athletics to revisit the FSP's objectives, including timelines. This has been offset in part by increased revenue from licensing and merchandising, expanded season ticket sales for both women's basketball and baseball, and increased revenue from alcohol sales. A comprehensive sports sponsorship review has been completed, and changes to the soft drink pouring rights should yield increased revenue for FY2020.

The department's associate athletic director/chief financial officer meets regularly with the vice president for finance and administration. In addition, the vice president/director of Intercollegiate Athletics and the associate athletic director/chief financial officer meet with the president and the vice president for finance and administration on a quarterly basis. A full status report regarding implementation of the FSP will be provided at the October 2019 Finance & Administration Committee meeting.

### **Comprehensive 10-Year Facilities Master Plan**

Athletics' goal is to complete and unveil a comprehensive 10-year facilities master plan this summer, including conceptual drawings for each project. Projects identified in the master plan have been incorporated into the Ten-Year Capital Plan 10-year capital forecast approved by the Board in January 2019. The master plan includes capital improvements identified in the recently completed Title IX review, which helped the University prioritize the needed improvements to facilities supporting women's sports.

### **Complete Reser Stadium**

One project identified in the ten-year capital forecast and the Athletics' facilities master plan is the completion of Reser Stadium. Efforts are currently underway to complete a Reser Stadium west-side feasibility study, conceptual programming, drawings, and a draft funding model. As it progresses, the project will be presented to the Board for stage gating approval. The guiding principles for the project include:

- 1) Seismic improvements;
- 2) Additional infrastructure (restrooms, concessions, etc.) that enhance the fan experience and the recruiting atmosphere;
- 3) Integrate vibrant 365-day student-centered programming on the West Side with potential public/private partnerships that benefit the university and community;
- 4) Build additional premium seating options and enhance annual revenue streams/opportunities; and
- 5) Create continuous main concourse that will promote community and ease of stadium access.

### **Other Capital Projects and Fundraising**

Guided in part by the 10-year facilities master plan, Athletics has launched the following initiatives:

- A new women’s basketball locker room and team room (approximately \$2.5M);
- A Sports Performance Center renovation (approximately \$3.5M);
- A renovation of the Omaha Room and the addition of a new right field balcony at Goss Stadium (\$2.6M);
- New LED lighting and heated dugouts at the OSU Softball Complex (approximately \$700K);
- Safety hand rails in Gill Coliseum (approximately \$125K); and
- The replacement of the dirt infield and removing the outfield grass and replacing with turf at the OSU Softball Complex (approximately \$700K).

Athletics also recently completed a significant LED project in Reser Stadium and Gill Coliseum with the installation of a state-of-the-art center hung videoboard and LED lighting in Gill Coliseum (\$2.9M), and a LED ribbon display at Reser Stadium (\$500K). These projects significantly enhanced the game day experience for all sports in both venues. LED lighting also reduces energy consumption, thus lowering Athletics’ utility bill. The bulk of the fundraising has been completed on the women’s basketball locker room and the Sports Performance Center and Goss Stadium enhancements initiatives have been fully funded via private donations.

Also guided by the master plan, Athletics has identified significant maintenance and repair needs related to safety, enhancing the student-athlete experience, and providing competitive competition venues. Significant renovations have included improved drainage for year round activity in the Whyte Track & Field Center’s hammer throw area (\$75K), installation of a state-of-the-art ramp to the rowing dock which will withstand flooding (\$235K), renovation of the Gill Coliseum women’s shower facility (\$300K), educational audio/video upgrades to the Valley Football Center meeting spaces (\$275K), and upgrades to the soccer surface at Paul Lorenz Field to improve drainage and provide professional shelters in the bench and training areas (\$125K). These important upgrades are identified through annual planning and funded by operating and OSU Foundation accounts. Additionally, with the support from university partners, plans to a complete renovation of the Gill Coliseum Plaza (approximately \$1M) is in the works with construction scheduled to start this summer as well as preliminary planning for a new gymnastics practice facility is underway.

Finally, in accordance with the strategic plan, Athletics has prioritized branding and aesthetics in existing facilities to attract recruits and celebrate OSU’s history of student-athlete achievements. Following a phased implementation plan funded both through the OSU Foundation and operating expenses, high impact graphics, branding, and hall of fame installations have been added to the OSU Softball Complex, Dale Thomas Wrestling Room, OSU Basketball Center (for both the men’s and women’s programs), Valley Football Center, Goss Stadium, Reser Stadium, Truax Indoor Center, and Whyte Track and Field Center. Scheduled planning efforts will continue to identify and implement similar annual upgrades.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

Our success at providing an environment for our student-athletes to achieve their academic and athletic goals is, in part, impacted by national trends and issues. Sustaining excellence in our program requires continuous assessment and monitoring of trends or events that might hinder

our efforts. The following is a summary of the main threats we are tracking and the strategies we are pursuing to address them.

**Threat:** *National mental health crisis within the student-athlete population.*

**Strategies:**

- Foster an environment that promotes comprehensive student-athlete wellness in all areas by:
  - Creating a framework and approach to building student-athlete capacities for success and wellness in all aspects;
  - Creating a wellness assessment tool for the framework that supports the comprehensive well-being of the evolving student-athlete;
  - Broadening inter-departmental and campus support for student-athlete wellness by addressing gaps in staffing and/or resources and access within the department and the campus (CAPS);
  - Leveraging Pac-12 Conference, NCAA ,and other partnerships;
  - Pursuing Quarterly Wellness Checks, Headspace, #DamWorthIt, and other initiatives.

**Threat:** *Increasing awareness of safety concerns such as concussions in football.*

**Strategies:**

- Bring the safety and well-being of student-athletes to the forefront while allowing the game to continue to evolve by:
  - Training coaches at all levels to teach safer techniques to players, thus helping to reduce injuries;
  - Continuing to work with NCAA and Pac12to reform rules with safety and well-being of the student-athletes (targeting, contact rules for practice, etc.);
  - Continuing to invest in equipment technology and partnering with the NCAA/Department of Defense and the Pac-12 in data collection and concussion research;
  - Continuing the evolution of “Return to Learn” and “Return to Play” best practices (post-concussion occurrence(s)).

**Threat:** *Maintaining the current collegiate model.*

**Strategies:**

- Bring the holistic development of our student-athletes back to the “center” by:

- Addressing pressures from legislators, potential court opinions and public regarding student athlete compensation for University use of their name, image, and likeness;
- Better coordinating between NCAA and major professional leagues;
- Delivering a robust education program to student-athletes, coaches and staff regarding sports gambling;
- Addressing current culture of “free-agency” stemming from transfer legislation.

***Threat:*** *The Pac-12 Conference distributions are lagging and the conference’s brand is damaged.*

***Strategies:***

- Support the Pac-12’s efforts by:
  - Supporting the Pac-12 Network owning and capitalizing on its own rights and potentially partnering with a strategic investor;
  - Helping to maintain focus on the issues and re-engaging practitioners;
  - Doing our part to execute the Pac-12 football and men’s basketball strategic plans.