EKU Athletics Mission & Value for Academic and Athletic Success

“As a school of opportunity, Eastern Kentucky University fosters personal growth and prepares students to contribute to the success and vitality of their communities, the Commonwealth, and the world.” This is the overarching mission of the University. It is also reflected in the mission of EKU Athletics: “Fostering the academic success of students through graduation and helping them become the best version of themselves through athletics.” Both statements recognize EKU's unwavering commitment to the educational success of all students.

The EKU Department of Athletics’ budget represents 4.3% of the overall EKU personnel and operating budget. Adhering to the mission, the University considers Athletics a direct investment to position EKU as a school of opportunity, achieve academic success at every level, recruit students to attend EKU, and encourage support for Eastern Kentucky University by alumni, business and community partners.

Additionally, University athletics fosters a campus culture of school spirit with programs that engage our current student body. EKU Athletics’ engagement and outreach represent strategic initiatives outlined in the Vision for 2020 EKU Strategic Plan goals for:

- **Commitment to Student Success**
  - Develop and implement programming and services to enhance student well being, health and wellness, civic engagement, and personal growth. (2.1.4)
  - Enhance student experiences University-wide by enhancing academic learning environments and increasing participation in living/learning communities, student organizations, and student-life programs. (2.3.4)
  - Create and upgrade existing facilities, including student recreation and intercollegiate athletics facilities. (2.3.5)

- **Institutional Distinction**
  - Craft a compelling brand identity and communication strategy. (3.2.1)
  - Design and implement a five-year, integrated marketing campaign that leverages our brand identity to advance our institution, aligns with our strategic plan, fuels our capital campaign, positions EKU intercollegiate athletics, and increases the number of students for whom EKU is their 1st Choice. (3.2.2)

- **Financial Strength**
  - Build an expansive network of advocates, partners and champions for EKU by communicating effectively with external stakeholders and involving them meaningfully in the life of the University. (4.2.1)
  - Increase revenue from private sources by engaging alumni, friends, and corporate partners to expand support for the people, places, and programs of EKU, including a comprehensive capital fundraising campaign. (4.2.2)
• **Service to Communities and Region**
  - Enhance and develop University facilities that draw visitors to EKU Campuses. (6.4.1)
  - Increase the number and appeal of programs and activities for which visitors travel to EKU Campuses, such as sporting and arts events, conferences and workshops, commencement ceremonies, and annual University events. (6.4.2)

With respect to the Faculty Senate Resolutions of the ad hoc Committee on Academics and Athletics presented on May 2, 2016, below is a summary of how EKU Athletics and students who participate in athletics enhance and support the overall academic mission of the University.

• **The University will ensure that academic programs are enhanced through developments and decisions with athletics.**

We believe that in order to make a difference in the lives of our Student-Athletes, we must provide them with the programs, services, and tools necessary for success in the classroom. Our most important pursuit is inspiring the quest for academic excellence of our student-athletes through structured support programming focused on a culture of integrity, and accountability. We want to inspire greatness and educate our students to become self-directed thinkers and learners. We want our student-athletes to discover who they are as leaders and develop effective leadership skills to empower themselves and make a difference.

In the Bratzke Student-Athlete Academic Success Center, we strive to create an atmosphere that encourages the students to take advantage of the support available that also provides a place of welcome. We have high expectations for our student-athletes and have many programs and services designed to build champions in the classroom.

**Academic Services for Student-Athletes:**
Academic Advising  
Individualized Schedule Planning  
Major Selection and Career Option  
Priority Registration for Classes  
S.T.A.R. Mentoring Program  
Bratzke Freshman Leadership Academy  
Tutoring  
Study Hall  
Life Skills Programming  
Community Outreach  
Travel Notifications  
Assistance with Recruiting Visits  
Academic Monitoring  
NCAA Eligibility Monitoring
- The University will prioritize academic program development at the college, department, and unit levels in future athletics plans and planning.

**EKU Department of Athletics Core Priorities**

1. Academic Excellence
2. Student-Athlete Success
3. Athletic Excellence
4. Compliance/Diversity/Gender Equity
5. Stewardship
6. Revenue Generation
7. Fan Engagement
8. Facilities

- The University will identify and communicate where it aspires to fit into the academic and athletic landscape.

**EKU Department of Athletics Purpose**

In addition to supporting the NCAA core values, the OVC mission statement, and the University's purpose, the EKU Department of Athletics operates according to the following vision statement, mission statement and core values:

**Vision Statement**

The Eastern Kentucky University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics will become a premier athletics department and the provider of a model student-athlete experience as we prioritize the student-athlete’s success in the classroom, broaden the student-athlete’s foundation for their future outside of athletics, continue to raise the bar and pursue championships in non-revenue sports, and focus on building and elevating successful revenue sports to win championships.

**Mission Statement**

Fostering the academic success of students through graduation and helping them become the best version of themselves through athletics.
• The Athletic Department will articulate--with faculty input--ways in which athletics is a component of the academic mission of the University.

EKU Student Athletes Succeed in the Classroom
EKU students who participate in athletics demonstrate success on the field or court and in the classroom. Eastern Kentucky University student-athletes are graduating at a rate of 81%, according to the NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) report. Eight of 13 sports met or exceeded the national GSR average for NCAA Division I institutions. Also, of upmost importance, they demonstrate academic success in critical measures currently being imposed upon higher education. Plainly stated, these are key performance measures that will determine 100% of EKU’s state funding allocations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EKU Students in Athletics</th>
<th>University-wide Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six-year Graduation Rate*</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention Rate*</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underrepresented minorities</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unofficial rates provided by Student Success, to be approved by CPE, December 2016

• EKU Athletics teams include more than 350 student-athletes, and the average GPA for student-athletes has exceeded the 3.0 benchmark during each term for the past nine semesters.
• Last spring recorded 3.179 GPA – highest ever all student-athlete term GPA
• Over 60% of student-athletes have recorded a 3.0 GPA or better, with 108 students earning a 4.0 GPA during the 2015-16 academic year.
• 91 student-athletes earned their college degrees during the 2015-16 Academic year
• 4 Teams Post Highest Fall GPA Ever: Women’s Tennis, Women’s Golf, Soccer, and Men’s Basketball
• 7 Teams Post Highest Spring GPA Ever: Men’s Basketball, Men’s Cross Country, Men’s Golf, Soccer, Softball, Men’s Track and Volleyball
• Nine consecutive semesters with GPA > 3.00
• Best-ever 3.179 all-student-athlete GPA in spring 2016
• Fifteen teams with GPA > 3.00
• 55 student-athletes with a perfect 4.0 GPA
• 101 on Dean’s List
• 196 Colonel Scholars (GPA > 3.00)
• **EKU's first Mitchell Scholar** (and only Kentucky public university recipient in scholarship program's history) is a student-athlete attending EKU on an athletics scholarship
• 62 Graduates in spring 2016
• **1483.5** total hours of community service during 2015-16
• 2013 OVC Institutional Sportsmanship Award
• 2016 OVC Commissioner’s Cup -- #1 overall in competition for third straight year and four out of last five years
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>2014-15 Multiyear APR</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Basketball</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Cross Country</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Golf</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Tennis</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Indoor Track</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Outdoor Track</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Basketball</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Cross Country</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Golf</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Soccer</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Tennis</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Indoor Track</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Outdoor Track</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Volleyball</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average ACT of all incoming freshman=20

Student-Athlete Minority Population=31% of the total student-athlete population

Student-Athlete Demographics
- Total (fall 2015): 391
  - In-State: 172
  - Out-of-State: 219
- As of 11/18/16 Athletics Scholarship Awards
  - Full scholarship: 166
  - Partial scholarship: 89
  - Walk-on: 70
  - Total: 334
- Student-athlete minority population:
  - 31% Athletics, 10% University

University Minority Population=11.6% of the entire student body
The Added Value to the University of Strong Athletics Programs

- Athletics provides programming through which alumni will return to campus and be active, while also creating a strong attraction for friends and alums to give financially back to Athletics and across EKU.
- Revenue is paid to the University from partial scholarship and walk-on student athletes.
- The EKU name rises in search engine rankings when posted in online media, including social media, especially if sites link back to EKU content. A mention of EKU by ESPN holds incredible value in brand relevance, as would a mention by Inside Higher Ed or the Chronicle of Higher Education.
- Consider EKU athletics scores are updated through ESPN websites and apps and guaranteed to appear several times a week during prime athletic seasons. In addition, our competitors are sharing the EKU name, linking to content and promoting our student-athletes whenever the Colonels appear on their schedule (UK, WKU, MSU, etc.). This cross-promotion is virtually exclusive to athletics.
- This type of visibility is influential in positioning EKU as a school of opportunity and success at every level, recruiting students to attend EKU, and encouraging community investment in the University.
- Enhances campus diversity – racially (minority population: 31% Athletics, 10% University) and geographically, providing a significant portion of the overall international student population.
- Strengthens overall academic excellence (athletics GPA significantly higher than all student average).
- Major part of campus culture – games and matches are a significant part of the student, alumni, and community experience.
- Reinforces “university of opportunity”- many student athletes are from at-risk backgrounds, first-generation college families, and may not pursue higher education if not for athletics.
- Athletics and overall fundraising doubled year-over-year. Majority of the University’s five largest lifetime donors are former athletes or have an athletics affinity or connection.