

**STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)**

**FY2011 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Submitted by:**



**The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics  
Mack Rhoades, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics**

**January 29, 2010**

1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.

The University of Houston hired Mack Rhoades as Director of Intercollegiate Athletics last summer, epitomizing the University's commitment to achieving Tier 1 status. The department is currently assessing all support areas to determine our most expedient pathway to excellence. It is essential we study our situation thoroughly before we proceed with conceiving a complete mission for the division. To guide us during this critical process, we have employed the following vision for the department.

The University of Houston - Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is dedicated to creating and supporting winning sports programs; providing a quality educational, social and athletics experience for our student-athletes through the *Building Champions for Life* Program; and enriching a culture of compliance to all National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Conference USA (C-USA), University and State of Texas rules and regulations.

Fulfillment of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics' directives begins with people, both quality student-athletes and personnel. Recruiting and training members of our department provide for the dedication and ability to realize academic and athletics achievements. People are our biggest investment, our most valued resource, and our greatest opportunity for sustainable success.

Our department is evaluating and organizing our current resources to ensure we are maximizing the use of our assets. The review of internal and external processes will continue to occur through the remainder of the fiscal year. The implementation of new strategies will provide improved efficiency in our organization, which serves to prioritize our significant needs.

Conducting our program with fiscal integrity and transparency are core elements to support our department's directives. A central effort is in progress to bolster revenue generation and donor contributions. The implementation of zero-based budgeting is an integral element to balance accountability and planning.

Athletics possesses an inherent ability to draw public interest to the University of Houston. We embrace the responsibility of portraying a positive image for our campus through televised sporting events, interaction with the media and service to the community. It also is important to understand sport medium entertains public interest through athletics-related-activities primarily in the summer, which offer an experience to individuals who might not otherwise visit our campus.

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics fully supports the University's mission to attain Tier 1 status, and we graciously accept our role in advancing the pursuit of the goal. Our directives serve to provide a means of institutional contribution commensurate with a successful athletics program. In respecting and building on a proud athletics tradition, we observe ourselves as a catalyst for student pride. The culture of our department is designed to involve the student body in providing entertainment at sporting events, in opportunities to join spirit groups, in contributing to support roles, and in sports program participation.

2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, custodian, etc), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.

Please see attachment.

3. List the objectives that you provided with your 2009-2010 SFAC request. Please comment on your success in achieving these objectives. If an objective changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new objectives, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these objectives.

Please note the change in leadership last summer with the hiring of the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Mack Rhoades, has inspired a complete program review which will impact a majority of the FY10 objectives.

A. Cultivate and Expect Academic Success

Continue efforts to improve graduation rates, academic progress and academic performance

The Academic Center for Excellence continues to assist student-athletes in achieving high academic goals. Our latest NCAA graduation rate based on student-athletes entering UH during the 2002-2003 was 51%, compared to the rate for all UH students entering as freshman that year of approximately 41%.

Current student-athletes benefit from over 20 tutors in subjects ranging from nutrition to biomechanics and from accounting to Spanish. Student-athletes also have access to the Athletics Academic Center, which houses a computer lab, private study rooms and tutoring/group study rooms. In addition, academic counselors are on duty five nights per week. Currently, 91% of our student-athletes are in good academic standing (cumulative GPA above 2.00), and 16% made the Dean's List for the fall 2009 semester. The average cumulative grade point average for a University of Houston student-athlete is 2.69. In addition, the average student-athlete passes over 13 hours per semester.

B. Cultivate and Expect Athletics Success

Achieve athletics success in all C-USA sponsored sports by competing for the Conference Championship and finishing in the top three spots in the overall conference standings.

Football – Competed in C-USA Championship game; participated in Armed Forces Bowl; ranked as high as 12<sup>th</sup> in national polls; defeated three Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conference schools

Men's Indoor Track – C-USA Champions

Men's Outdoor Track – C-USA Champions

Women's Indoor Track – Top 3 Finish at C-USA Championships

Women's Outdoor Track – Top 3 finish at C-USA Championships

Women's Swimming/Diving – 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in C-USA Championships

Awarded five C-USA Coach of the Year honors

Athletics Success directive has been re-targeted for Top 40 ranking in the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA)

Director's Cup, an award program to assess overall sport program excellence.

C. Develop and Nurture Life Skills

This directive has been refocused to target *Building Champions for Life*. The *Cougar Leadership Development Program* comprehensively will approach the aspiration of educating leaders. With an inclusive scope and significant depth of the proposed programming, the initiative unequivocally distinguishes UH Athletics as having one of the best leadership development programs in intercollegiate athletics and the first in C-USA.

D. Enhance University Exposure and Publicity (New Objective)

As an ambassador of the University of Houston, the Athletics Department strives to maximize exposure through athletics competition attendance, televised athletics events, media coverage and non-university related activities. The interest is to promote the institution in a positive manner through experiences on-campus, on-air and on-paper.

In 2009, University of Houston athletics programs participated in 20 televised contests, 50 radio broadcasted events, and 130 internet broadcasted games. Annual attendance at home athletics contests ranged over 200,000, and outside events brought an additional 390,500 more visitors to campus.

E. Increase External Financial Support

The Athletics Department endeavors to augment our operation through Cougar Pride (to raise money for scholarships) and from home events (to increase revenue off-setting expenses).

The focus of this directive has been enhanced to include the stated pursuit and to also diversify the scope. The financial support vehicle has been expanded to include a priority on increasing fan base and season ticket sales. Several sub-groups have been created to raise funds specifically for sports programs, capital projects, as well as increasing the quality of membership for current Cougar Pride members. The arrangement with our corporate sponsorship/multi-media partner, International Sports Properties (ISP), is under review and likely to be renegotiated to increase rights fees and inventory. And the Marketing and Promotions effort for our program will be reworked to target increasing ticket sales and attendance.

F. Equitable Opportunities -- ensure fair and equitable treatment for all student-athletes.

This objective has been augmented such that a gender equity evaluation and reporting process will be employed to address the status of UH Athletics. This measure would include, if needed, a strategic initiative plan.

- G. Fiscal Integrity - develop, implement, and maintain a plan which provides student-athletes an opportunity to succeed both academically and athletically, while reducing the University subsidy for Athletics.

All fiscal matters are currently being reviewed as part of the vision for the department. All programs will participate in a Zero-Based Budgeting Process to determine real projections for operating levels.

4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and the satisfaction level of those served. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

Evaluations are based on responses from alumni, fans, students, University administration, competitive records of teams, and academic records of student-athletes. With the development of an Athletics Strategic Plan, goals and objectives are reviewed on a regular basis and revised to reflect the current climate. Data regarding the number of persons served is based on attendance figures, ticket office audits and business office accounting records.

#### Number of Students Served

1. Student-Athletes/Managers/Trainers/Tutors.....532
2. Band, Cougar Dolls, Cheerleaders (Spirit Groups).....345
3. Student-Workers at events.....80
4. Total Student Attendance at Athletics Events.....30,580

5. Please discuss any budget changes from your last (FY2010) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections. In addition, if your unit concluded FY2009 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balance, please describe the conditions which caused the fund balance.

The economic downturn distressing the nation dramatically has impacted our fund-raising endeavors. Reliable donors' resources are not in position to enable program contribution. As an example, the John and Rebecca Moores Endowment, a consistent benefactor, has been compromised by the investment markets to the point it has not been able to supplement our operational funding in FY09 or FY10. The result of the situation has projected a budget shortfall of \$1.8 million in FY10.

6. Please list your 2010-2011 objectives in priority order. Larger units may wish to group your response by subprogram. Under each objective, state the specific programs, activities, and/or services that you plan to implement to meet your objectives.

#### Objective 1 – Tradition

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to cultivating winning sports programs with strong fan support. Each coach and sports program shall be provided with the guidance, facilities and resources to build and maintain team success in C-USA competition. Fans will be provided with quality entertainment value. All sports programs will strive for finishing in the top 3 of C-USA. Baseball, Men's and Women's Basketball, Football, and Men's and Women's Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field should consistently compete at the national level – Top 25.

#### Objective 2 – Student-Athlete Experience

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is dedicated to providing quality educational, social and athletics experience ending with the award of an undergraduate degree. Leadership is essential for overall life success, and the collegiate athletics experience provides for a welcome opportunity to embrace and develop the quality. The *Cougar Leadership Development Program* brings student-athletes together from their freshmen year through graduation to learn skills that will promote their own well being, academic potential, leadership ability, and sense of responsibility to their community. With the comprehensive scope and intensive depth of the proposed programming, the *Program* unequivocally distinguishes UH Athletics as having one of the best leadership programs in intercollegiate athletics and the first program in C-USA. Not only does this innovative Leadership Program maintain and enhance UH Athletics' reputation nationally and internationally, it also provides the department with a distinct and powerful advantage in attracting and retaining highly talented student-athletes and coaches

#### Objective 3 – Compliance

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is devoted to fostering a culture of compliance within all areas of UH Athletics operations. Thorough departmental practices will be developed to insure UH Athletics is in strict adherence to NCAA, Office of Civil Rights, C-USA, University and State of Texas rules and regulations.

*The following series of measures enable the achievement of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics objectives.*

#### I. Department Component Review

All areas within the department will be assessed by end of fiscal year 2010. The overall department is subject to reorganization including restructured reporting lines, staffing assignments, and the roles of Sports Program Administrators. Each department unit will undergo specific goal-setting activities as well as evaluation measures. The Spirit of Cooperation initiative will be engendered to facilitate positive relations with University departments.

A thorough external operations review will proceed to develop clear objectives for improving capacities outside the department. Careful consideration and planning is being measured for Development (Cougar Pride), and the structure is in place to embark on a Capital Campaign for facility renovations, construction and enhancements. The program's arrangement with ISP is being evaluated for

renegotiation, and marketing/promotions efforts are targeted to increase paid sporting event attendance. The areas of merchandising, ticket operation, and facilities are under review for improved efficiency and maximization of return.

*Athletics has commissioned a Facility Feasibility Study and Comparative Analysis to assess options for Robertson Stadium and Hofheinz Pavilion specifically, but may also include an athletics master plan survey. The project is to be completed in May 2010 and will provide direction for our capital needs.*

Each sports program will be evaluated for support relevant to benchmark programs with comparable resources. All areas will be studied to reasonably project needs for all teams.

## II. Academic Services Study

The Student-Athlete Admissions Review Policy will be created and implemented. A comprehensive academic success and award recognition program will be initiated to celebrate educational achievement. Two programs - Grade Audit and Attendance Audit - will be enlisted to raise the accountability of our student-athletes and teams. The Student-Athlete Academic Contract will be developed to facilitate timely progress towards graduation. The NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) will be monitored more closely to heighten awareness of potential concerns, and an APR improvement plan will be implemented for sports programs needing assistance.

## III. Fiscal Integrity Cultivation

The implementation of a Zero-Based Budget Processing System for all departmental cost centers inherently will require divisions to carefully review expense plans relative to economic climate and need. Athletics also will present a Three-Year Budget Initiative to University Administration and the Board of Regents.

## IV. Compliance Adherence

A detailed review will be performed on the C-USA Compliance Audit which inspects all compliance systems and services. A Financial Aid Policy/Process will be introduced to govern application of athletics aid for the academic year, summer school and fifth-year scholarship. The department also will submit for annual all-staff NCAA rules compliance training.

## V. CHAMPS/Life Skills Development

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee will be empowered to contribute on issues of student-athlete welfare and departmental policy/vision. And the establishment of the *Cougar Leadership Development Program* will provide the training for life skills and real-world preparation.

VI. Gender Equity Assessment

An evaluation and reporting mechanism will be implemented to assess the status of UH Athletics in terms of Title IX compliance. The process will include a strategic plan to advance opportunities for women in athletics, should one be necessary.

VII. Human Resources/Personnel

A review is underway to assess the culture of the department relevant to morale and functional effectiveness. Programs educating on diversity and professional development will be implemented to offer opportunities for growth and enhancement. Also, a Department Human Resources Task Force will be appointed to proactively address new employee orientation, special events and professional development topics.

7. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)?

Revenue generation and donor contributions are key elements to athletics success and viability. Pursuing excellence in the recruiting and training of exemplary student-athletes, the hiring and retaining of exceptional coaching talent and staff, and the provision of quality facilities are all fueled by athletics ability to draw financial interest to our program. Under the new direction of the department, a comprehensive strategy and conjunctive effort will be executed to maximize any and all possible sources of funding. Those sources include:

- Season and individual game ticket sales
- Annual giving
- Capital gifts
- Parking revenue
- Concession sales
- Corporate sponsorships
- Marketing royalties
- Outside event contracts

8. Please describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

Student-Athlete Services overlaps the academic advising component for student-athletes. Due to the consuming schedule commitments (competition, training, travel, etc.) and NCAA academic eligibility rules compliance required of a student-athlete, athletics has provided academic counselors who are more accessible and specifically trained to address these specific concerns.

