

Support for Starting a Football Program at Pacific University
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The President, in his State of the University address last September, said that now is the time to start a football program. As promised, he would like the faculty to debate and to vote on the merits of doing so. This document presents a rationale for starting a football program at this time, and at the end it addresses some of the concerns articulated by faculty members in the past.

Although there are many reasons for starting up football, two main reasons emerge:

- Pacific's current economic model is predicated on continued growth; without some modest growth, the budget would suffer. Football offers the only nearly sure way to add at least 100 undergraduate students in a short time frame.
- The undergraduate population is roughly two-thirds female, and we would like to increase the percentage of male students. Recent results at other liberal arts colleges show that the proportion of males increases after adding football. It would also increase campus diversity.

Budget Issues. Growth is necessary under our current fiscal model, and no other new undergraduate program would have such an immediate and substantial impact on enrollment. Our budget model presupposes growth for the next several years. Some of that growth, to 1700 students, must come from Arts & Sciences, and having that growth would insure that we have the resources to continue to increase salaries and benefits and to invest in academics. Unfortunately, A&S enrollment growth has slowed to a crawl, and unless we have some vibrant new initiatives, our budget would suffer.

Starting up football would be expensive, which is why the President agreed to raise the \$1.5 million start-up costs from outside sources. Once football is established, its revenue would cover its operating costs plus A&S educational costs plus contribute to university overhead. In addition to the revenue, football would also bring in a cadre of students that would not otherwise attend Pacific. The marginal benefit from each of those students would be greater than that of a football player and helps make a compelling economic argument for football's return.

Enrollment Growth. It is instructive to look at why Division III schools have added and continue to maintain football programs. A major part stems from trying to address enrollment pressures and carries ancillary benefits of increasing the percentage of males and minorities on campus.

- A&S has grown by 200 students from 2003 through 2008-09, an addition of 40 students per year, but because of the economy that growth has tapered off. Our yield last year was low (percent of accepted students who actually enrolled); our survey shows that many who normally would have chosen Pacific chose public institutions because of perceived price difference. We simply must do something to head the enrollment trend upward again, and football looks like a sure bet.
- Growth would come from players, but we would also attract others, many of them male, helping to build and to maintain enrollment. Western Oregon's Athletic Director claimed that WOU has about 250 students there because it has a football program. Undoubtedly, many males do not consider Pacific because of lack of football.

- When student-athletes choose a college, some want to go to the same institution that has attracted their athlete friends; if those friends play football, then Pacific is not a choice, even though we have thriving programs in other sports. Our coaches believe that having a strong football program will provide a boost to their own recruitment.
- Linfield has a female-to-male ratio of 55:45. Shenandoah went from 35% to 41% male after starting up football.
- Football has a way of generating excitement and crowds not enjoyed by most other sports; it also attracts philanthropy and alumni loyalty.

Financial Overview. The current version of the business plan has 3 scenarios, with the team playing games at Hillsboro Stadium, at Forest Grove High School, or at Lincoln Park after installing Field Turf on the practice field. Although the Lincoln Park scenario is favored—and ultimately we must play our games there—we may not have that for a few years because of the additional capital that would have to be raised. Athletics, Arts & Sciences, and the President’s Cabinet all agree that we need to play football in Forest Grove within a few years of start up.

To have financial success, football must pay its own way, pay the cost to educate the players, and contribute to university overhead. Finances for the option of playing at Forest Grove High School are summarized in the attached spreadsheet (in comparison, it is a slightly cheaper option to play at Lincoln Park, once the Field Turf for the existing practice field is paid for with external funds).

We believe that the numbers are conservative in three ways:

- Other liberal arts colleges that have started football recently have attracted more students than presented here.
- We have consulted other successful programs about their budgets, and ours is considerably higher to ensure that in no way could we be underestimating expenses; indeed, we expect to spend less in every year.
- Although we include progressive net tuition increases that might not be sustainable at the given level because of the economy, we also include a “cost to educate” expense that is the average for the College; in truth, the marginal cost to educate an additional student is quite a bit less than that average.

The bottom line is that a football program would pay for itself, would pay the cost to educate each additional student, and would make a substantial contribution to university overhead. The conservative projection of 36% overhead contribution is comparable to the percentage for some of the graduate programs. Not addressed in this financial analysis is that room and board revenue pays for those costs and covers a substantial fraction of student life salaries, another overhead component.

In the past, faculty members have raised issues concerning start up of football, and below we try to address some of the questions and assertions that have been made. Some questions reference surveys we conducted among our conference schools and schools that recently started football.

Q1. How important are athletics to student recruitment?

A1. A&S has grown by 200 students in the last five years; two-thirds of that growth can be attributed to the 136-student increase in varsity rosters. While 31% of undergraduates participate in varsity sports (up from 24% in 2003-04), 34% of the F08 freshman class participates. Every coach is a recruiter.

Q2. How does the college football landscape apply to Pacific?

A2. Pacific, as with all of its sports, would play in NCAA Division III. Unlike Divisions I and II, Division III does not provide athletic scholarships. Division III emphasizes academics and development of the person, rather than on providing entertainment akin to professional sports.

Q3. Who else plays in our area?

A3. The Northwest Conference plays football as a varsity sport, with only Whitman, George Fox, and Pacific sitting on the sidelines. Willamette, Lewis & Clark, Puget Sound, Linfield, Pacific Lutheran, and Whitworth all field teams. Linfield was the national champion in 2004. In 2008, Willamette was the best team in the west, amassing 11 wins, followed by 1 loss in the second round of the national champion playoffs.

Q4. With Western Washington U recently dropping football, isn't football on the way out?

A4. Apples and oranges. For the story on WWU, see its website:

www.vikings.cstv.com/sports/m-footbl/spec-rel/011309aac.html

In contrast to state school (mostly) participation in Divisions I and II, Division III is thriving, with 18 schools adding football since 2000 and with only 4 dropping the sport. Lewis & Clark, which recently suffered from low player numbers, decided to reinvest in football, rather than drop the sport.

Q5. How can we be sure that we will meet the numbers?

A5. Almost every high school plays football, and football has the largest number of high school sports participants by far. Only a tiny fraction of 1% of these students will play at Division I and II schools. That leaves a huge number to play at Division III; in the Northwest, there are only 623 students playing DIII football. Average rosters are 90 students. These could be larger, but that's hard to justify when, realistically, only about 50 students will ever get to play. Because of costs, travelling teams (half the games) have to be limited to 50 or 60 players.

We contacted the Division III schools that have started up football recently to find out first-year enrollment. The low was 55; the high was 210 new students at Mary Hardin-Baylor. Others: North Carolina Wesleyan—176; Shenandoah—115; Northwestern—81.

The schools surveyed also emphasized that football attracted many other students besides the players.

Q6. Football seems antithetical to a liberal arts education.

A6. Of the 22 highest ranked co-ed liberal arts colleges, 19 (86%) play football. Although Swarthmore is one of the 4 schools that dropped football, it is still played by Amherst, Williams, Carleton, Grinnell, Pomona, Macalester, Oberlin, et al.

Q7. Football players are unhealthy because of their size; the sport is rife with 300 pound linemen.

A7. While that might be true for Divisions I and II, it is not true for Division III. Of the 623 players in our conference, only 14 (2%) weigh from the high 290's into the 300's. Northwest Conference linemen (typically about 28% of a roster) average about 250 pounds.

Q8. Aren't we going to see lots of serious injuries from this contact sport?

A8. The Northwest Conference tracks season-ending injuries for contact sports. Wrestling is not included because it is not a conference sport. Here are the 5-year average data for 6 sports. The number given is the percent of participants conference-wide that suffered season-ending injuries.

Women's basketball 2.7%

Men's basketball	1.7%
Men's soccer	1.7%
Women's soccer	1.5%
Baseball	1.4%
Football	1.1%

Q9. Football players cause trouble on campus and do not take academics seriously.

A9. Bad behavior is not corroborated by a survey of the NWC athletic directors. The average GPAs for some football programs for the last three years are:

Lewis & Clark	3.1 (L&C would not give more precision)
Puget Sound	2.99
Pacific Lutheran	2.97
Willamette	2.93
Whitworth	2.93
Linfield	2.81

For reference, the average team GPA at Pacific is 3.02, whereas the average GPA for non-athletes is 0.2 to 0.3 points lower. Average team GPAs have risen from 2.89 in 2003-04 to 3.02 in 2007-08. Pacific's athletic department places academics first, which would be no different for football.

Q10. Can't we just expand existing teams?

A10. The only rosters that can accommodate significant growth are swimming and track and field. The numbers that we can add there would not be enough.

Q11. Won't addition of such a large men's sport negatively affect our Title IX compliance?

A11. No, we have added 5 women's sports recently (track & field, golf, wrestling, swimming, lacrosse), which establishes our history of increasing women's participation.

Q12. Would football affect diversity on campus?

A12. Undoubtedly. While Pacific enjoys the highest diversity index among conference schools, we have a relative lack of African Americans and Hispanics. Currently, conference players are 9% African American, 6% native Hawaiian, 4% Hispanic, and 3% other minority.

Q13. How can we be sure that we will accommodate the academic needs of the large influx of football players?

A13. Because football is getting such close scrutiny at all levels, we have added "cost to educate" into the football budget; there is more than enough revenue set aside to meet these students' needs.

If 100 new students diffused out over the curriculum, we could easily accommodate that without changing much. However, statistics show that most football players will gravitate toward business, exercise science, and education. Business is slated for growth, and trustees and senior administrators strongly support starting a college of business; business could also benefit from more upper-division enrollment. Education has newly constructed Berglund Hall and could accommodate enrollment growth.

The one sticker is exercise science. In discussions with the President's Cabinet, it has become clear that exercise science needs expanded facilities, even if we do not have football. In discussions with the architects for new science facilities, we have tentatively settled on using \$3 million from the expected \$25 million for new facilities to expand the PAC and to double the size of exercise science facilities. It makes most sense to use the first \$3 million raised because it is a critical need, it's easier to raise \$3 million than \$22 million, and we can use the building of excellent new facilities as an effective lever for raising the other \$22 million. We would also need to expand the number of exercise science faculty if we adopt football.

Q14. How can this work if we're not playing in Forest Grove?

A14. The administration understands that, long term, this only works if we are playing in Forest Grove at Lincoln Park, and everyone is committed to making that happen as soon as possible. We have spoken with the City Manager and the Chair of the Planning Commission, and they are very receptive to our installing Field Turf on the Lincoln Park practice field.

Q15. What happens if we can't raise the necessary start-up funds?

A15. We don't start a football program. But we are confident that we would be able to raise the funds.

Q16. How will we avoid having a repeat of the sorry history of the early 1990s?

A16. Pacific had a football program for 99 years before cancelling it in 1992. Generally, four major issues conspired together to bring about football's demise:

- Pacific had just finished two dismal seasons, finishing 2W/7L in 1990 and 0W/9L in 1991.
- A student died from complications arising several months later from injuries sustained on the field.
- For some of the years just prior to 1992, the football program suffered greatly from lack of effective leadership, resulting in recruitment of less-than-stellar scholars, many of whom stayed for just one semester before leaving, mostly because of academic ineligibility.
- We hired a great new coach to try to save the program; however, his audit of the program showed that infrastructure costs would be very large, more than \$1 million, including replacing a stadium that was about to be condemned.

Since that time, the landscape has changed dramatically:

- Pacific was in the NAIA and was literally and figuratively playing teams out of its league; many of those schools, public institutions much larger than Pacific and that provide athletic scholarships, have moved to NCAA Division II.
- Athletics at Pacific has come a long way since 1992. As is abundantly clear, Athletics now has the resources to succeed in ways that it could not in the past. Renovations to the PAC and to Lincoln Park and team expansions are obvious manifestations, but so are: varsity athletes have an average GPA of over 3.0, about 0.3 higher than non-athletes; athlete retention is higher; 2/3rds of A&S enrollment growth of 200 since 2003 is from athletics.