

About ASC

Athletics Staffing and Consulting (ASC) assists conferences, colleges and universities with consulting services in college athletics with a special emphasis in the small college arena. ASC offers colleges and universities a wide range of consulting options from helping institutions transition to new conferences and national associations to conducting feasibility studies to departmental analyses. The firm has been in existence since 2007. Kurt Patberg, the primary contact on the Mississippi University for Women (The W) projects has been involved with intercollegiate athletic administration for over 30 years serving nearly 15 as a small college commissioner.

Feasibility Study for The W

- Over a year was spent conversing and studying the possibility of reinstating athletics at The W.
The options considered were: National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II or Division III
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)
- The cost of doing business in scholarshiped athletics (NAIA and Division II) was a major issue in analyzing the best option for The W. As ASC suggested in the initial report, these national and divisional affiliation decisions should be based on far more than finances, but it is a factor. The report addressed NCAA Division III and in doing so highlighted many of the following items:
 - 1) How does athletics relate to the philosophy and mission of the University?
 - 2) Will The W's athletics programs attract the type student-athlete that is the best fit for the University?
 - 3) Does the student-athlete experience integrate well with the other institutional offerings?
 - 4) What role does athletics play in the larger, but critically important, factor of enhancing enrollment and retention at the institution?
- During this process there was a point that it became clear to most all involved what path athletics should take. It also became clear that "The best option is not the easiest option but the right option". Why Division III? DIII should provide the opportunity for the Mississippi University for Women to recruit a higher caliber student-athlete with regard to academics and character and is the most cost effective manner for The W to run an intercollegiate athletic program.
- Considerations taken into account that will help The W be competitive are as follows:
 - o The W will offer a lower cost to attend than the other DIII schools in a four-state area.
 - o The state of Mississippi has strong junior college athletic programs and could have some student-athletes that will be non-scholarship student-athletes prospects.
 - o There are few Division III options in a four-state area. The number of DIII programs in that four-state area are: Alabama, two; Louisiana, two; Mississippi, three; and Tennessee, three.

Several of the larger challenges facing The W:

- Securing membership affiliation with the NCAA Division III and with a member conference
- Enhancing current facilities and the building some additional Division III quality facilities
- Recruitment of and retention of Division III quality student-athletes *

**Recruiting females may be a challenge due to the ripple effect due to an abundance of athletic scholarship opportunities for women whereas recruiting males may be a challenge because the institution carries "for Women" in its name.*

Because The W needs something tangible to secure conference membership if they want athletics and feel Division III is clearly in their best interest, it is the opinion of ASC, The W should begin adding intercollegiate programs even though they do not have a conference and national affiliation. This proposition has some risks; but if programs are not started, the chance of The W ever securing membership is limited.

Once in place and operating as a 13-15 sport intercollegiate program in a member conference of NCAA Division III, the athletic programs should have a great chance of success. It is the securing of the conference and national affiliation that will be the major challenge, but once secured the decisions of The W to proceed with this route will be affirmed.

Listed in the attached documents is a discussion of why DIII is the best option, the cost of doing business, the values of intercollegiate athletics, etc.

NCAA Division III Membership Considerations

(taken in part from the Feasibility Study)

This study primarily addresses the affiliation of The W with the NCAA only as a Division III member. The first rather clear distinction is that much of Division III is composed of high-academic, mostly private institutions. DIII membership has over 75% private institutions with the small percentage of public institutions regionalized primarily in Wisconsin, New York and the Northeast. There are currently no public NCAA Division III institutions in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, or South Carolina. The state of Florida has no NCAA Division III members, private or public.

Competing for quality student athletes, without awarding athletic scholarships, against schools that often times have better academic standing and provide much more institutional (non-athletic aid) for student-athletes can be a challenge. Over the past ten years, however, The W has shown its ability to sustain enrollment and academic standing without the use of athletics. Furthermore, with very few other area institutions competing at the NCAA Division III level and with a low cost of attendance, ASC feels that The W should be able to recruit athletes that can make the University a competitive Division III institution. Furthermore, the out-of-state waiver programs available to The W allow for a broader recruiting base where the low cost of attendance could be a significant advantage.

The biggest challenge to The W will be conference affiliation in Division III (joining NCAA Division III as an independent is not a viable long-term option). There appear to be only a few options for membership. One option is attempt to gain membership in a southern division of the USA South Conference which its development appears to be on the horizon. This southern division of the USA South would include many of the old members of the Great South Athletic Conference.

The only other reasonable option would be The American Southwest Conference. With schools located in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, it is a conference made up of a good mix of private and public institutions. Belhaven University has just been offered membership in this league for all of its sports. The advantage to this league is that it is an established league with its full allotment of automatic qualifiers and does not need any new members that might stretch their geographical boundaries. The W will have a difficult time gaining membership in this league given that they are located outside their geographical footprint and that The W will not offer football. Belhaven arguably was outside their footprint as well but offers a league short on football-playing institutions another football-playing member. Even if membership were secured, this option would stretch the amount of travel costs and missed class time for the students to compete in that league.

In summary, The W, with no existing athletic programs and no assurance of getting into NCAA Division III, will have some challenges in establishing themselves in Division III, but this is clearly the path that should first be pursued by the ASC staff in evaluating the opportunities. Exceptions to the recommendation to first make an attempt at NCAA DIII membership would be as follows:

- If The W is unable to secure membership in a Division III conference that could be helpful and persuasive to the NCAA DIII membership committee as to why The W should be allowed to move directly into Division III with the reinstatement of its athletic programs.
- If The W gets a sense that the current name of Mississippi University for Women will make it difficult to gain NCAA membership support for an institution that might appear to some to be a women's institution trying to sponsor men's sports programs.
- If The W is unable to gain support from the NCAA Division III Membership Committee even with the support of a Division III conference.
- If no funding is available to begin building an athletic complex necessary for the conducting a quality NCAA Division III athletic program.
- If the University is unable to finance the operating and staffing budgets necessary for a competitive and professionally run NCAA Division III athletic program.

Question and Answers Related to ASC's Study

Can The W be successful at the NCAA Division III level?

Yes, the staff at ASC does feel The W can be successful, but there are factors to consider. The price point to attend The W will be lower than the schools The W will be recruiting against for the NCAA DIII athlete. The quality of coaches selected will have an impact as well as recruiting student-athletes based on eventual conference affiliation. Other items that will impact The W's future success are the quality of facilities eventually added and upgraded, the changing of the name of the institution, and the confirmation of the waivers for students from contiguous states.

Since one aspect of "success" is recruitment and retention, can The W recruit and retain the type of athlete, with no athletic scholarships, that will allow it to be competitive in NCAA Division III?

Assuming that the facilities as addressed in the study are met, the staff at ASC feels that The W can attract and retain DIII athletes. Initially it will be tough, especially in the men's sports, with its current name; but with a lower cost of attendance than the schools it will be competing against and very few other DIII public institutions, the ASC staff feels it is possible. The out-of-state waivers for persons in contiguous states will be a major benefit along with the attractive and quality majors offered by the institution. Also, community/junior college transfers are not new to The W, and the University does a great job of securing this type of student. Initially, until some traditions and proven on-field excellence are exhibited, the coaches will need to sell recruits on the fact that athletes can come and immediately contribute to the teams versus some other schools that cannot promise the same opportunities. Assisting with this success will be hiring a good leader in athletics, gaining conference affiliation, and eventually a name change.

Where will The W be the most competitive?

In what division could The W have the most success and be most competitive both regionally and nationally? The answer to this question is somewhat subjective and based on unknowns. What we do know though is that both NCAA Division II (340) and NCAA Division III (450) have more schools, which will, because of sheer numbers, make any move a challenging one with regard to being nationally competitive. Yet along with these larger national member numbers comes a similar percentage of postseason berths in virtually every sport. What we also know is that competing in the Gulf South Conference and NCAA DII will be the most costly option followed by the other scholarship option, the NAIA. Moving to NCAA DII or the NAIA can tax an institution that partially uses athletics as an enrollment tool to enhance its traditional undergraduate student population.

Can The W be successful at the NAIA level?

The W can be competitive at the NAIA level, but it will have to produce some sizeable scholarship dollars; and success at the NAIA level is often based on scholarships provided. Most of the nationally competitive schools in each of the national championship sports highly fund their sports.

Besides assisting with enrollment, what benefits do athletics bring to a small college campus like The W?

Statistics show that athletes have higher GPA's, are retained at a higher rate and have higher graduation rates. Besides those obvious benefits of athletics, collegiate sports on campus provide the following:

- An avenue for alumni and parents to participate in campus activities
- Display of excellence (competitiveness and success of the athletic programs)
- Communal and uniting activities for the University constituents (school spirit, etc.)
- Student-centered activities of campus

What are the best conference affiliation options?

This answer is clearly articulated in this study, but the best option might not be available, which would be a formation of a new NCAA Division III league in the southeastern states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Why are the budgets being recommended at the level they are currently being recommended?

These budgets would put The W's budgets in the midrange to just above midrange in the respective conferences under consideration.

What kind of athletic director is recommended for the W?

The type of AD needed at The W is one that can build relationships and partnerships with community leaders, corporate partners, and potential donors while having the experience and knowledge to build and staff a future DIII department. Although not a must, experience at the Division III level would be preferred and would be an asset.

Budgetary Considerations Taken from the Feasibility Study

The next chart provided by ASC lists the proposed future sports that should be under consideration by The W along with some estimated squad sizes for the programs to be established. This chart also includes the remaining per-sport expenditures for personnel—the estimated cost of part-time and full-time coaches. The information on the right shows the sports sponsored by the American Southwest Conference (ASC) and the potential southern division of the USA South Conference (USA South) of NCAA Division III and the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) of the NAIA. Listed toward the bottom of the chart are possible sport additions based on future facilities, possible conference affiliation and the belief of The W administration that these sports could be successful at the institution.

Mississippi University for Women Sport Sponsorship						
Sports	Size	Ops Cost	Personnel	ASC	USA	SSAC
Women’s Basketball	14	45,000	90,000	X	X	X
Men’s Basketball	16	45,000	90,000	X	X	X
Volleyball	14	25,000	55,000	X	X	X
Women’s Soccer	20	35,000	55,000	X	X	X
Men’s Soccer	24	35,000	55,000	X	X	X
Softball	20	40,000	65,000	X	X	X
Baseball	38	60,000	65,000	X	X	X
Women’s Tennis	7	12,000	17,500	X	X	X
Men’s Tennis	8	12,000	17,500	X	X	X
Women’s Golf	6	14,000	7,000	X	X	X
Men’s Golf	8	14,000	7,000	X	X	X
Women’s Cross Country	7	6,500	6,000	X	X	X
Men’s Cross Country	8	6,500	6,000	X	X	X
Team Totals	190	350,000	536,000			
Administrative	3	340,000	180,000			
Totals	88/102	690,000	716,000			
Women’s Swimming	20	19,000	25,000			
Men’s Swimming	15	17,000	25,000			
Women’s Lacrosse	22	35,000	55,000		X	
Men’s Lacrosse	26	35,000	55,000			
Women’s Track	22	15,000	39,000	X		
Men’s Track	33	17,000	39,000	X		
Totals	150/176	828,000	\$954,000			

The next chart is one of the most useful charts in this study as it provides the per-sport data for NCAA Division III affiliation and ultimately illustrates the contribution margin, revenue produced from enrollment minus the estimated expenses for the sports. The chart is telling and shows important information that will help the administration understand and administer the programs by sport.

- Most of the sports under consideration are not revenue contributors. The sports of men’s and women’s basketball are the biggest budget drains but are necessary to be able to get into a conference.
- Baseball produces the highest annual enrollment numbers and the most annual income.
- Men’s and women’s cross country provide the best contribution per student-athlete.
- Some of the best enrollment sports are not on the recommended list either due to the lack of conference sponsorship or the difficulty by The W to sponsor the sport. For example, men’s and women’s lacrosse lack popularity in the State of Mississippi, The W does not have a track facility available to them, football is not on the table for consideration due to the cultural change it can have on an institution, and there are a limited number of NCAA DIII or NAIA competitors for swimming in south.

**Includes \$77,760 of revenue from an estimated eight out of state non-waiver students*

^Averages

Information Utilized in Contribution Margin Chart

The following information was used to construct this contribution margin chart. Please note, however, that these contribution margins do not take into consideration expenses for building of facilities. Additionally, the sports at the bottom of the chart (light grey) show contribution margins if just that sport were added to the mix. The figures show the contribution margins based on the adding of that sport as compared to the other recommended sports.

SA's = Student-Athlete

Pro-Rata Share=portion of non-sport athletic department expenses

*Does not re-count cross country runners already on campus

Contribution Margins for The W Proposed Athletic Programs										
Sports Program	# of SA's	Tuition/ Fees	Financial Aid	Salaries Benefits	Operating Expense	Pro-Rata Share	Total Expense	Contrib. Margin	Contrib. Per SA	CM%
Basketball W	14	77,560	17,513	90,000	45,000	38,324	190,837	-113,277	-8,091	-22.1
Basketball M	16	88,640	20,015	90,000	45,000	43,784	198,780	-110,140	-6,884	-21.5
Volleyball	14	77,560	17,513	55,000	25,000	38,324	135,837	-58,277	-4,163	-11.4
Soccer W	20	110,800	25,019	55,000	35,000	54,737	169,756	-58,956	-2,948	-11.5
Soccer M	24	132,960	30,022	55,000	35,000	65,584	185,606	-52,646	-2,194	-10.3
Baseball	38	210,520	47,535	65,000	60,000	104,000	276,535	-66,015	-1,737	-12.9
Softball	20	110,800	25,019	65,000	40,000	54,754	184,773	-73,973	-3,699	-14.4
Tennis M/W	15	83,100	18,764	35,000	24,000	41,054	118,818	-35,718	-2,381	-7.0
X Country M/W	15	83,100	18,764	12,000	13,000	41,054	84,818	-1,718	-114	-0.30
Golf M/W	14	77,560	17,513	14,000	28,000	38,324	97,837	-20,277	-1,448	-3.95
Total FTE	190	*1,130,360	237,677	536,000	350,000	519,939	1,643,616	*-513,256	^-3,366	-11.5
Swimming M/W	35	193,900	43,783	50,000	36,000	80,860	210,643	-16,743	-478	
Lacrosse W	22	121,880	27,520	55,000	35,000	53,976	171,496	-49,616	-2,255	
Lacrosse M	26	144,040	32,524	55,000	35,000	62,592	185,116	-41,076	-1,580	
Football	100	554,000	125,093	300,000	200,000	179,296	804,389	-250,389	-2,504	
Track/Field M/W*	55	304,700	68,801	58,000	32,000	116,740	275,541	29,159	530	

Actual cost of attendance (includes books, supplies, fees, and tuition and fees)

Total number of SA's for recommended sports = 190	\$1,052,600
Added revenue from estimated 8 out-of-state athletes (non-waiver)	\$77,760
Total enrollment revenue from athletics (\$5,540)**	\$1,130,360
Average discount rate off of tuition of 22.58%	-\$237,677
Total tuition and fee minus discount rate	\$892,683
Recommended athletic department annual operating/personnel expenses	<u>\$1,405,939</u>
Total revenue minus expenses	-\$513,256

** Does not include \$100 for capital improvements

As is stated earlier in this chapter, no net revenue is generated on income from room, board, and books. It is, however, estimated that the total number of athletes requiring housing would be approximately 87% (166 out of 190) with an estimated 96-104 of them in dorms with the remaining 62-70 in off-campus housing. Obviously these estimated figures could be altered by special emphasis being placed on on-campus housing by the senior leadership. It is estimated that about 25 student athletes would commute to campus.

The Mississippi State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) funding formula that was recently approved by the Board of Trustees of these public state universities would produce some revenue once this formula is fully implemented using the three-year rolling average. The estimation is that The W would receive, for the full athletic enrollment of 190 athletes after the three years of full benefits [with no significant changes in performance at the other IHL institutions], an annual formula funding of an estimated \$500,000.

Also, no outside annual income generated by the department through fundraising events, annual fund drives, ticket sales, corporate sponsorships, etc. has been included in the revenue streams. ASC wanted to show the estimated revenues and expenditures without these amounts due to the fact that these revenues will not be readily available for several years into the development of the programs. Additionally, this new revenue is often times used to subsidize new needs that may arise. It should be assumed that annual funding in the range of \$200-300,000 annually can be expected once the programs are established.

Student Demographics Provided for Study (2013-14)

The information compiled on contribution margins was based on data for The W from Fall '13

- Institutional discount rate for FY13 -- 22.58%
- Total occupancy in the residence halls is 681 of which 542 were occupied (Fall of '13)
- Total unduplicated headcount was 2629 with total undergraduate headcount -- 2429
- Undergraduate degree-seeking students taking classes on campus in Columbus -- 1520
- Not living in the residence halls -- 978
- Living on campus -- 542

Of the total unduplicated headcount of 2629, 447 were taking classes through the RN to BSN program (Tupelo). The number of undergraduate students in Fall 13 was 2429. Of that number, 1696 were taking classes on campus. When the 542 residence hall students are subtracted, the result shows 1154 under-graduate students taking classes on campus of which 176 are non-degree seeking students, leaving 978 degree-seeking undergraduate students not living in residence halls but coming to Columbus for classes.

Student Living Categories	Living w/ Parent	On Campus	Off Campus	Out-of-State
Regular student costs	\$9,620	\$13,023	\$12,655	Add \$9720
Nursing students	\$11,405	\$14,773	\$14,405	Add \$9720
