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Executive Summary

Collegiate Consulting was retained by Pace University to perform benchmarking and assist with the development of a strategic plan to evaluate the athletic department and align it with the educational mission and strategic plan of the University.

The data utilized in this report was provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, the Northeast-10 Conference, the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis, Google Maps, Pace University, individual institutions’ websites, the NCAA and the most recent US Census. Since new athletic management arrived at Pace in 2011, we see a specific intent to align the athletic program with the educational mission and strategic plan for the University.

The process began by identifying priorities that needed immediate attention, including:

- Overhauling the athletic scholarship awarding system
- Implementing a gender equity plan to get the University closer to Title IX compliance
- Focusing on enhancing the student-athlete experience
- Constructing new athletic facilities per the Campus Master Plan
- Restructuring of the organizational chart while fully developing job descriptions
- Implementing an athletic development plan
- Creating a road map for a competitive football program

This document’s priority is for the athletic department to maximize the University’s return on investment by positioning itself to be successful, athletically and academically, in the highly prestigious Northeast-10. Although it continues to be an on-going project, it is clear that significant progress has been made. As the University embarks on a new strategic plan it is time for a more comprehensive strategic plan for the department of athletics and recreation.

Collegiate Consulting is happy to present the following conclusions:

1. Pace’s financial support of the Department of Athletics and Recreation is reasonable. It falls within 1% of the average amongst NE-10 football schools.

- Financial aid equivalencies are in line with the conference average. We would expect Pace to spend more in athletic aid given its ranking as the highest cost of attendance in the conference.

- Travel budgets are generally lower than we would have expected given the distance Pace teams must travel due to its location. On average Pace travel time is 9% higher than the conference mean.

- The number of coaches and staff dedicated to support the area of athletics and recreation is adequate and average amongst Northeast-10 schools. However, staff compensation is below average due to the cost of living in the areas surrounding Pace. We would have expected compensation to be above average since the cost of living in Pleasantville ranks the 2nd highest compared to all Northeast-10 schools.

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2. Athletics will play a key role in the repositioning of the Pleasantville campus. The planned 40% increase in roster growth by FY18 with approximately 420 residents will be a driving force in the development of a traditional suburban campus.

3. Pace’s facilities, when completed by the Fall of 2015, will support the current and future approved program expansion at a reasonable level.

4. Pace’s sport sponsorship is perfectly aligned with the Northeast-10 Conference given enrollment and facilities.

5. The recent adoption of standard Division II blending of financial aid will significantly improve both the academic and competitive success of all sports teams.

6. The recent investments in the football program, combined with the new facilities and the blending of aid, will position the football team to win four to five games a year by 2017.

7. The planned campus consolidation will significantly improve fitness center utilization and intramural participation, which should positively impact student retention.

8. Collegiate Consulting acknowledges the financial position of the institution and, given so, Pace needs to be strategic and impactful in the decision making process. The decisions to invest in facilities and scholarships are sound areas that we see the most significant return on investment.
Core Values

This process has illuminated seven core values that will serve as a beacon to direct and solidify the athletic department’s role as part of the larger Pace community. The seven core values are listed below and are vital to our success.

- Academic Achievement
- Citizenship and Civic Engagement
- Compliance and Integrity
- Competitive Success
- Inclusivity
- Sportsmanship and Respect
- Student Fitness, Health and Wellness

Mission Statement

First and foremost, the athletic department will strive to complement and support the larger Pace University mission. To fully support the academic mission, student-athletes will be considered students first and as such are expected to academically outperform the general student population. Thus, the Department of Athletics and Recreation helps the University satisfy its primary aspiration, which is to prepare students to lead purposeful and fulfilling lives in a global society through experiential, collaborative and discovery-based learning.

Consistent with the Pace motto of “Opportunitas”, the athletic department will strive to offer athletic opportunities to a wide range of students in an environment in which student-athletes can achieve their academic and athletic goals. Furthermore, the athletic department will support a broad based and competitive intercollegiate sport curriculum consistent with NCAA Division II and the NE-10 policies designed to cultivate school spirit and campus pride.

Pace is also committed to providing opportunities to enhance the physical, social and emotional well-being of the entire campus community. Student-athletes in particular are expected to adhere to a level of conduct that upholds the values of citizenship, inclusion and service.

In view of the health and educational value of athletics, in addition to varsity programs, the athletic department will create opportunities for participation in club sports, intramurals and individual exercise.

Vision

The Department of Athletics and Recreation will place emphasis on the student-athlete experience as a comprehensive program of co-curriculum learning and development in pursuit of both academic and athletic excellence. This approach provides opportunities for growth and education through participation in high-level athletic competition as well as development of positive societal attitudes through service to our communities. Recreational programs focus on student health and wellness and will provide the student community a means for their social development beyond the classroom experiences.
I. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- In 2013, athletics reallocated resources to create a full-time position dedicated to the academic success of student-athletes.

- Pace’s student-athlete graduation rate among the 2007-08 cohort is 22% higher than the general student body.

- The Division II Academic Success Rate (ASR) is the four-year rolling average of graduation outcomes for student-athletes. Pace has an overall Academic Success Rate of 83% which ranks 12th out of 15 schools in the conference. The average ASR for the Northeast-10 Conference is 86%.

- Pace University student-athlete 2013-14 grade point averages of 3.18 is 2% higher than the conference mean. The men’s average GPA is 3.10 compared to the women’s average GPA of 3.26.

- Pace has tripled its number of academic all-conference honors from three to nine within four years.

- In the Fall of 2014, 183 student-athletes had above a 3.0 GPA and were selected to the Commissioner’s Honor Roll, an increase of 23 student-athletes from last fall. Additionally, five student-athletes were named to the All-Academic team and garnered Academic All-American honors.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Improve cumulative departmental average grade point average (GPA) to 3.30.

2. Maintain a graduation rate above the general student population at Pace.

3. Improve the department Academic Success Rate (ASR) to 88% or better which will position Pace in the top half of the Northeast-10.

4. Place 200 student-athletes on the Commissioner’s Honor Roll each semester.

5. Place at least four student-athletes on a Division II Academic All-American team within five years.

Action Plan:

1. With the blending of financial aid, coaches will aggressively recruit student-athletes who excel in the classroom with either a 3.25 GPA or 1140 SAT score.

2. Reinforce Pace academic admissions standards with all coaches by evaluating the academic resume of each team’s incoming class during the annual performance review.

3. Implement a set of procedures which will better identify at-risk and learning disabled student-athletes and provide them with additional academic support.

4. Educate coaches with data on the benefits of directing student–athletes to the tutoring center as it relates to retention and GPA.

5. Through first alert meetings and academic progress reports, the Associate AD for Academics will communicate with all coaches, academic tutors, academic advisors and deans of each school about the progress of all student-athletes.

6. Promote all academic awards received by student-athletes and teams on the athletic department website.
II. ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

- Over 800 gifts to date have been designated to the athletic department in FY15, the most in the history of the department in one fiscal year.

- 15 alumni events are organized annually by the athletics/alumni relations staff, including the Pace Athletics Hall of Fame and Awards Dinner.

- Attendance at the Hall of Fame dinner is up 80% since 2010.

- Joseph Ianniello ’90 is the first athletics alumnus (football) to be added to the Pace University Board of Trustees.

- George Spiropoulos ’96 (football and lacrosse) has promised the first annual commitment to a varsity program.

- This is an area that holds significant opportunity for the University and increased collaboration is planned with the development office.

**Strategic Initiatives:**

1. Create a “culture of philanthropy” among the athletics alumni base to encourage enhanced levels of giving to support our varsity sport programs.

2. Conduct quarterly reviews with the Office of Development to identify alumni who have the capacity to be helpful and devise a comprehensive engagement strategy to start the cultivation process.

3. Increase annual athletic giving by 10% annually.

**Action Plan:**

1. Construct a proposal to fully develop the athletics component of the Campaign for Pleasantville to drive fundraising efforts. This includes additional naming rights opportunities, seat/brick campaigns and the baseball dugout project in honor of Gene Westmoreland ’65 and Fred Calaicone.

2. Revisit the athletic development staffing model with the Office of Development in the summer of 2015 to consider reinstating the Associate AD for Development position.

3. In collaboration with the development office, identify needs for our varsity sport programs and develop a capital projects fundraising plan to assist in student-athlete recruiting efforts and enhance the game day experience.

4. Establish best practices for the Setters Club annual giving platform to complement the goals set forth by the annual fund team to increase the participation rate among our supporters each year.
III. CAMPUS RECREATION AND WELLNESS

- The Athletic Department embraces their role in the area of recreation and wellness and its impact on student retention.
- Pleasantville campus has 42,000 student visits and NYC campus has 36,000 student visits for fitness and wellness per year.
- Pleasantville campus has 323 unique participants and NYC campus has 380 unique participants for intramurals each year.
- Health and Wellness credit and non-credit courses are offered on both campuses.
- The addition of turf athletic facilities with lighting will provide growth in participation of students in intramurals on the Pleasantville campus.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Increase fitness and wellness visits by 5% annually for a total increase of 15% on both campuses by 2018.
2. Expand intramural offerings on both the NYC and Westchester campuses to increase participation levels by 45% by 2018.
3. Ensure a safe and accessible environment while inspiring a healthy and active lifestyle.
4. Ensure that all recreation facilities function at a level to enable an enjoyable experience for all users.

Action Plan:

1. Conduct bi-annual peer and student surveys to identify and maintain appropriate recreational offerings to ensure the needs of the campus community wellness and fitness continue to be met.
2. Offer eight new intramural sport seasons by utilizing outdoor facilities created by campus master plan.
3. Offer two club sport programs by FY17.
4. Develop an annual replacement cycle for athletic equipment on both campuses to ensure students have access to top level equipment.
5. Conduct a fitness and wellness orientation for the Pace community at the beginning of each semester. Provide quarterly updates to the Pace community on wellness opportunities.
IV. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- As a critical piece of the Division II platform, the Athletic Department is engaged with the local community through service, outreach activities and events.

- Student-athletes participate in over 1,000 hours of service in the local community each year.

- The Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) is influential in raising money for both local and national organizations. This includes the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Northern Westchester Hospital Breast Institute.

**Strategic Initiatives:**

1. Develop a communication flow chart by the Fall of 2015 to improve documentation and promotion of community service projects to better communicate the relationship between Pace student-athletes and the Pleasantville community.

2. Achieve 100% participation of teams in annual community outreach projects.

3. Promote service initiatives among coaches, student-athletes and department staff on campus and throughout the community.

4. Provide programs and engagement opportunities for the community to integrate with the Pleasantville campus.

**Action Plan:**

1. Require each coach to develop a community service plan that is incorporated in the annual performance review.

2. Connect each varsity program with one community service or local sport organization annually.

3. Develop a yearly report highlighting community engagement.

4. Assign an athletic administrator to work directly with coaches, SAAC and captain’s council to identify community service programs.
V. COMPETITIVE EXPECTATIONS

- The University has taken substantial steps in improving the competitive expectations with the recent investment in athletic facilities.

- Pace’s academic scheduling patterns and limited sections in particular majors due to the size of certain programs have created scheduling conflicts that have negatively impacted athletic success. The addition of lights on two of the new athletic fields will provide more opportunities for practice and will significantly limit conflicts moving forward.

- The blending of financial aid will allow the University to be extremely competitive in its recruitment of student-athletes and is a significant strength.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Develop a standard of excellence within the Northeast-10 Conference by having 11 teams qualify for the conference championships each year by 2017.

2. Improve post-season play by achieving three NCAA post-season bids annually starting in 2016.

3. Place in the Top 150 of the NCAA Division II Directors’ Cup standings given the current sports programming at Pace within the next five years.

4. Attract and retain quality coaches and staff that have consistent values that mirror University educational mission by continually developing networks within Division II.

5. Conduct annual evaluations with head coaches and sports administrators to review the status of each program.

Action Plan:

1. Finish in the top half of the Northeast-10 Conference standings for each sport that maintains 75% of the NCAA equivalences.

2. Develop game schedules that are based on team expectations, the experience level of returning team members and the potential of the incoming class.

3. Provide coaches with competitive salaries within the Northeast-10 and summer camp opportunities while promoting professional development.

4. Perform an annual SWOT analysis for each varsity program with the head coach and sport administrator.

5. Evaluate a strength and conditioning program annually as it relates to each varsity program.
VI. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

- Over the past 12 months, Pace has adopted the blending of academic, need-based and athletic aid to comply with the standard in NCAA Division II.

- There is a planned 40% increase in roster growth by FY18 with approximately 90% of student-athletes residing on campus.

- The athletic department will play a key role in the repositioning of the Pleasantville campus which is one of the goals of the campus master plan.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Increase enrollment to 465 student-athletes by 2018 which would be a 40% increase from 2014.

2. Recruit and enroll 60 high level student-athletes annually, defined as a student entering Pace with a high school GPA that exceeds 3.25 or an SAT of 1140.

3. To help broaden the recruiting base, recruit 20% of each incoming class from outside the tri-state area including an emphasis on international students.

4. Organize athletic recruiting efforts around relevant University enrollment management events by having 100% athletic participation for all on-campus recruiting fairs.

5. Establish and maintain a retention rate among the recruited student-athletes between 1st to 2nd year that exceeds the overall student population on the Pleasantville campus.

Action Plan:

1. The athletic department will collaborate with enrollment management, budget and financial aid offices to forecast budgets the following recruiting cycle 8-12 months prior to each fiscal year.

2. The compliance officer will ensure current level of athletic scholarship support is maintained and total academic, need-based and athletic scholarships fall within NCAA permitted allocations with the oversight of the University financial aid office.

3. The athletic director will work closely with each coach to make sure their annual recruiting efforts ensure the athletic department’s ROI increases compared to the previous fiscal year.

4. The athletic director or designee will meet with each head coach to review scholarship budgets and a recruiting plan as it relates to financial aid awards for their prospective team as part of the annual performance review.
VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Pace’s financial support of their athletic department is reasonable. In pure budget dollars it falls within 1% of the average amongst all Northeast-10 football schools. However, Pace’s athletic budget accounts for only 6% of University (Westchester) expenses, the lowest proportion in the conference. Northeast-10 members on average operate with an athletics budget that accounts for 9% of the total institutional budget.

- Financial aid equivalencies are in line with the conference average. Given that institutional aid in Pleasantville is currently very high, the level of athletic aid is adequate. When institutional aid returns to normal levels we would expect Pace to spend more in athletic aid given its ranking as the highest cost of attendance institution in the conference.

- The number of administrative staff dedicated to the area of athletics and fitness is adequate and average amongst Northeast-10 Conference schools. However, staff compensation is below average due to the cost of living in the areas surrounding Pace. We would have expected this to be above average since the cost of living in Pleasantville ranks the 2nd highest compared to all Northeast-10 schools.

- Pace fell 9.71 coaching positions short and 1.58 graduate assistants behind the NE-10 average, among the same sports sponsored by Pace. Salaries for head coaches are below average given the cost of living in Westchester.

- Team travel is the largest operating expense for all schools in the Northeast-10. The average travel distance for Pace athletic teams is 9% higher than the conference average.

Strategic initiatives:

1. Investigate a strategy that will enable the athletic department to proactively manage standard consumer price index to maintain reasonable support of student-athletes as it relates to team travel, officials, medical coverage and recruiting.

2. Explore strategies to maximize self-generated revenue by increasing the athletic department’s goal each year by 7.5%.

3. Prepare department-wide resource management strategies to maximizing buying power of department for transportation, apparel, equipment lodging and board.

Action Plan:

1. Establish a departmental task force that includes representation from the faculty, administration and office of finance that meets semi-annually to increase transparency and continually explore and review ways to maximize operational efficiently to best control costs.

2. Develop a business case annually that accounts for roster goal variances and an annual CPI adjustment to allow for escalating costs of team travel, recruiting and medical care.

3. Identify the consolidation of business ventures to yield productive pricing by securing corporate partners.

4. Seek partnerships with corporations that can directly enhance operational services by offering cash or trade.

5. Review fundraising plans for each varsity program necessary to offset budget gaps.
VIII. FOOTBALL

- As a result of strategic investments and initiatives made by the University, Pace’s football program is poised to climb out of its recent record of poor performance.

- As of fiscal year 2015, the staffing and operating budgets are competitive with Northeast-10 football schools.

- The new athletic facilities per the University master plan will be a significant improvement that will help in the recruitment and retention of football student-athletes.

- The blending of financial aid will allow for the recruitment of a higher caliber football student-athlete.

**Strategic Initiatives:**

1. Win four to five games by 2017.
2. Increase alumni support to $30K by Fall 2016.
3. Increase home game attendance to an average of 1,500 by Fall 2016.
4. Increase the football Academic Success Rate from 83% in 2004-2007 cohort to 86% by 2018. Academic success rate (ASR) is defined as the four-year rolling average of graduation outcomes for student-athletes.

**Action Plan:**

1. With the blending of financial aid, football can now aggressively recruit student-athletes who excel both academically and athletically.
2. Utilize 100% of allocated athletic scholarship budget.
3. Develop a culture of academic success by collaborating with tutorial services.
4. Maintain current level of operating and staff budget allocations through business case submissions.
5. Win two games in Fall 2015 and three to four games in Fall of 2016.
6. Create a memorable game day experience with a special focus on Pace students, faculty, staff, alumni and local community families.
7. Enhance community partnerships to increase attendance and develop group sales efforts.
IX. GENDER EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- A comprehensive analysis was performed by a University Gender Equity Review Committee in 2012 to assess the current sports offerings at Pace University in regards to Title IX.

- Women’s lacrosse was added in FY 2015 and field hockey will begin competition in fiscal year 2016.

- Pace University will remain compliant for the next three to five years with Title IX due to compliance with Prong Two of the gender equity test. Prong Two states: The institution has a “history and continuing practice of program expansion” for the underrepresented sex.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Strive to maintain equity between men’s and women’s programs in regards to resources and facilities.

2. Seek to increase the number of minority applicants for coaching and staff positions within the athletic department.

3. Explore sports sponsorship for women’s programs that mirrors the Northeast-10 Conference such as tennis, golf and track.

Action Plan:

1. Conduct an annual review of student-athlete populations under the supervision of the University Faculty Athletic Representative and the Senior Women’s Administrator.

2. Provide comparable budgets for men’s and women’s varsity athletic programs including equipment, travel and salaries.

3. Allocate equitable camp and clinic opportunities to men’s and women’s coaches.

4. Conduct a formal gender equity audit every five years to explore possible program expansion for the underrepresented gender.

5. Utilize the Black Coaches Association and NCAA minority internship program when hiring.

6. Educate student-athletes on the programming provided within the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Programming by partnering with SAAC.