

Athletics

FY 2026 Strategic Plan Alignment and Budget Presentation

Mr. Bobby Williams



Department of Athletics

- NCAA Division I Men's Sports Sponsored (7)

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Football
- Golf
- Indoor Track
- Outdoor Track

- NCAA Division I Women's Sports Sponsored (11)

- Basketball
- Beach Volleyball
- Bowling
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Soccer
- Softball
- Tennis
- Indoor Track
- Outdoor Track
- Volleyball

FY 2025 Accomplishments

Priority 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access

- The department produced an overall grade point average of 3.13 for all sports for the fall of 2024.
- The department achieved its highest NCAA Academic Progress Rate since the inception of the APR with a score of 990. 10 sports earned a perfect 1000 for a single year score. Softball and Women's Golf received a perfect multi-year average of 1000.
- 57 Student-Athletes received the CUSA Commissioner's Academic Medal for earning a cumulative above 3.75
- 221 Student-Athletes made the CUSA Commissioner's Honor Roll for earning a cumulative above 3.0

FY 2025 Accomplishments

Priority 2: Embody a Culture of Excellence

- The Women's Golf team advanced to the NCAA Regional in College Station
- Women's Bowling advanced to the NCAA Regionals in Arlington
- The Football team finished the season 10-3 and earned a bowl bid for the first time in school history, beating Georgia Southern in the New Orleans Bowl.
- The Chuck & Wanda Beckner Tennis Center is the new home for Women's Tennis program.
- New artificial playing surfaces were installed at the Football & Softball stadiums.

FY 2025 Accomplishments

Priority 3: Elevate the Reputation and Visibility of SHSU

- Sam Houston Athletics broadcasted 70 home events on ESPN and other linear platforms
- Cam Huefner & Denise Blankenzee were named CUSA Scholar Athletes of the Year
- Bearkat Sports Network became available on Sirius XM Radio.
- BSN is also accessible on platforms such as Apple TV, Fire TV, Roku, and Amazon, as well as through the Apple & Google Play stores.

FY 2025 Accomplishments

Priority 4: Expand and Elevate our Service to the State and Beyond

The individual sports and the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) have participated in numerous community service projects.

The beneficiaries from these projects include but are not limited to the following:

- Good Shepherd Mission
- SAAFE House
- Special Olympics New Orleans
- Several local public & private elementary schools
- CASA of Huntsville
- Bayes Achievement Center
- Hearts Veterans Museum of Texas
- Creekside Retirement Home
- Hospitality House
- Ronald McDonald House Houston

FY 2026 Keep Doing

Statement: Athletics plans to keep awarding Cost of Attendance to Student Athletes because this will allow the department to be competitive in the market when recruiting and retaining quality student-athletes. This action aligns with Strategy 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access and Goal 1.1- Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth, and will have the effect of an increase in recruiting and retaining quality student-athletes and higher rates of enrollment in achieving Pillar 2-Retention.

Supporting Data:

COA stipends at mid-majors like Gonzaga (\$34.5M revenue) and Boise State (\$47M) enhance recruiting by closing financial gaps, attracting talent (e.g., UNI's Sweet 16 run), and retaining athletes (e.g., UNCW's stability). They make programs competitive, though limited by budget constraints and NIL disparities, per 2023 studies.

Resources / Collaborations Required:

Continued and expanded funding / Finance and Operations, University Advancement

FY 2026 Keep Doing

Statement: Athletics plans to keep the Nutrition Program for Student-Athletes because this will give student-athletes the resources they require to be the best that they can be in the classroom and on the Field. This action aligns with Strategy 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access and Goal 1.1- Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth, and will have the effect of an increase in recruiting and retaining quality student-athletes and higher rates of enrollment in achieving Pillar 2-Retention.

Supporting Data:

Nutrition programs at mid-majors like Gonzaga and UNI provide tailored plans, education on timing, and hydration, boosting athletic performance and recovery. They enhance focus and academic success with nutrient-rich diets, addressing knowledge gaps and stress, ensuring student-athletes excel on the field and in the classroom.

Resources / Collaborations Required:

Continued and expanded funding / University Advancement, Student Affairs, Finance and Operations

FY 2026 Keep Doing

Statement: Fan engagement excellence boosts a university's reputation, revenue, and community, attracting students and funding. For graduates, it strengthens alumni networks, enhances degree value, and opens career opportunities, creating a cycle of loyalty and success benefiting both the institution and its alumni. This action aligns with Strategy 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access and Goal 1.1- Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth, and will have the effect of an increase in recruiting and retaining quality student-athletes and higher rates of enrollment in achieving Pillar 2-Retention.

Supporting Data:

Mid-major universities like Gonzaga (\$34.5M revenue), Boise State (\$47M), and JMU (FBS rise) show fan engagement boosts revenue and visibility. Graduates from WKU (100,000 alumni), UNCW (7% salary premium), and ETSU (10% job uptick) gain stronger networks and career benefits, proving engagement drives success.

Resources / Collaborations Required:

Integrated Marketing and Communications, University Advancement, ROTC, Student Affairs, Spirit Teams, Dance Teams

FY 2026 Stop Doing

Statement:

Athletics plans to stop redundancies within the department to increase process efficiencies because this will allow for a better focus of time, resources, staffing, and technology. This action aligns with Strategy 2: Embody a culture of excellence and Goal 2.2- Align processes and resources, such as staffing, facilities, technology, and other assets to strategic priorities, and will have the effect of an increased flexibility for staff in achieving Pillar 4- Agility.

Supporting Data:

Reducing redundancies at C-USA's WKU (\$28.54M budget) and WAC's ACU boosted efficiency, freeing time and resources for athlete support like FIU's facility upgrades. Technology optimization at SHSU and staffing focus at SUU enhanced competitiveness, though budget constraints and morale risks must be managed, per 2020 studies.

Resources / Collaborations Required:

Outside university Staff expertise / Finance and Operations, SEI, Chief Strategy Officer

FY 2026 Start Doing

Statement:

Athletics plans to start using the Holistic Student-Athlete Model required by the NCAA because this will establish baseline expectations for the experience of a student-athlete. This action aligns with Strategy 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access and Goal 1.1- Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth, and will have the effect of an increase in social integration and career readiness in achieving Pillar 2-Retention.

Supporting Data:

The Holistic Student-Athlete Model sets expectations for well-being, addressing mental health (29% female anxiety, 2023 NCAA study) and academic support (94% won't go pro, 2019 study). It ensures structured care, though budget constraints and cultural variations challenge implementation, per 2024 studies.

Resources / Collaborations Required:

None at this time/ Student Affairs (Health Services, Career Services, etc.)

Athletics Summary

Keep Doing

Keep #1: Awarding Cost of Attendance

Keep #2: Utilizing the Nutrition Program

Keep #3 Fan Engagement

Stop Doing

Stop #1: Redundancies in the Department

Start Doing

Start #1: NCAA Holistic Model

Questions?