

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Regarding UNM Athletics Recommendations

Why is UNM Athletics at this significant crossroads?

As indicated in a [letter to the UNM community](#) in late May, our financial challenges run deep and include an accumulated deficit in addition to annual budget shortfalls. UNM Athletics continued to spend money that it simply did not have and we must make the difficult decisions now to ensure that UNM Athletics remains competitive and sustainable. Concurrently, an independent Title IX assessment revealed that, if funding for athletics did not increase, let alone if funding were cut, UNM may become non-compliant with federal laws in providing equal opportunities for both male and female athletes.

Why were these four sports selected for elimination?

In our review process, we examined every UNM sport. The factors used in making the recommendation include, but were not limited to:

- **Impact:** Number of student-athletes, coaches and staff impacted by elimination
- **Finances:** Impact on finances, including costs, revenues, associated costs, to support individual programs (Strength & Conditioning, Athletic Training, Academic Advisors, etc.)
- **Title IX:** Compliance with federal equity laws; necessity to try and continue to sponsor women's sports with large participation numbers
- **Conference Affiliation:** In order to continue to compete at the Division I level, UNM must sponsor a minimum of 16 varsity sports and to remain a member of the Mountain West Conference, we must sponsor football, men's and women's basketball and volleyball; ability for UNM to be competitive; costs associated with conference travel; number of programs sponsored in the NCAA
 - Affiliation with the MWC is critically important because we have over 400 student athletes who came to UNM to compete at the highest level. Affiliation with other, non-FBS conferences, would not provide the financial, academic and competitive advantages of the MWC.
- **Facilities:** Financial resources needed to build or maintain competitive facilities; costs of facility maintenance; opportunity for success in recruiting and competition
- **Program History:** Recent and long-term on-field success of a program; number and impact of alumni from program
- **Impact/Support:** Fan and community interest in program; impact on local and state communities; regional impact; and factor on institution
- **Private Support:** Donor support of program; number of endowments, if any

- **Scheduling:** Conference scheduling; travel partners; levels of competition; and ability for postseason competition
- **Academics:** Academic performance including Academic Progress Rate (APR) and Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of a program; and impact on Department academics

How many student-athletes are affected?

If the recommendations are adopted by the Board of Regents, 63 student-athletes will be impacted after July 1, 2019, when the changes would go into effect. However, 16 are graduating seniors who would have been done with their playing eligibility by the time the cuts would take effect, leaving 47 players remaining affected.

How many coaches and staff members are affected?

If the recommendations are adopted by the Board of Regents, four coaches and two staff members will be impacted after July 1, 2019, when the changes would go into effect.

If the Board approves the recommendations, will UNM still sponsor the affected sports (men’s and women’s skiing, men’s soccer and beach volleyball) in 2018-2019?

Yes, and we will continue to provide them with all of the same support and resources to enable their success as a team and as individuals. The competition schedule will not change nor will the opportunities to win in the respective sports.

Will student-athletes lose their scholarships?

No. The University of New Mexico will honor all current scholarship levels through graduation from UNM. The financial aid will continue to cover the current Grant-in-Aid agreement for as long as students are enrolled as an eligible student and meet all requirements.

Can student-athletes in the impacted sports leave to continue their playing careers elsewhere now or after our season?

While we would encourage the affected student-athletes to stay to represent the Lobos in 2018-2019, we also recognize and understand that they may want to explore other options. Our student-athletes have a commitment that UNM Athletics will do whatever we can to support those who seek a transfer.

Will student-athletes have to sit out a season as a transfer?

If the recommendations are approved by the Board of Regents, we will work quickly with the NCAA on a plan that would allow any of the student-athletes in one of the four impacted sports to transfer to another school and to be eligible immediately.

What will happen to coaches and staff if the Board approves the recommendations?

All of the impacted coaches and staff will continue in their roles through June 30th, 2019, with full compensation and benefits.

The Board of Regents tasked UNM with finding a way to address the athletics budget deficit and balance the budget. What is your plan to address it?

There has been much discussion about addressing a \$1.9 million deficit. The \$1.9 million is only the reduction in sports portion of the total required recurring reduction of \$3.4 million in cost containment measures. The remainder in savings comes from the \$975,000 grant-in-aid subsidies from main campus and the last of the savings will come from additional revenue opportunities, further expense reductions in operational budgets and potential other funding.

Can sports be saved if enough money is raised to cover costs?

Simply coming up with funding to cover costs will not “save” a sport. First, we need to increase our funding to all areas in our department and just not simply maintain the current funding levels. The costs to support our teams and student-athletes have continually increased and, moving forward, they will only grow. Second, the plan submitted to President Stokes for her and Board of Regents’ approval is not just for the upcoming year. Rather, it is a long-range plan to ensure the stability of the department. Lastly, funding is only one part of the challenge, as we must also make decisions that will maintain compliance with Title IX, by balancing the participation opportunities more equitably.

What if the state legislature can come up with funding for the proposed discontinued sports?

Any state appropriation for UNM athletics would need to be recurring and sufficient to sustain a sport or sports long-term. A one-time appropriation would have us facing the same issues the next year. Additionally, the University has other academic priorities that could be addressed with any new funding.

What if UNM just added a few women’s sports?

On the surface, adding sports or roster management may alleviate the Title IX challenge, but it would further deepen our financial crisis. Simply put, we cannot even afford to continue to fund our sports at the current levels, let alone increase funding for them and take on the high costs of additional sports.

Why don’t you just raise student fees to cover the costs of sports?

All UNM students already bear a significant financial burden in paying for their educations in addition to student fees. Placing even more financial responsibilities solely on our students to support sports is not the only answer. Also, additional revenue does not address the current Title IX concerns.

Will any other sports be eliminated beyond the four recommended?

At this time, all other UNM varsity sports programs would continue to be sponsored though, as proposed in the recommendations, the roster management plan will be initiated immediately. This plan ensures that the department is sustainable at the level of remaining sports.

Could the University assume the \$2 million annual Pit debt payment so UNM Athletics can use the savings to continue to fund all current sports?

While eliminating a significant annual expense will help the overall bottom line, the savings will not allow UNM to sustainably fund its current sports offerings in the future at a level necessary for success. We want to fund all of our programs at a high level, which includes top facilities, training equipment, travel and an array of world-class support staff, all of which cost an increasing amount of money. In our estimates, it would take approximately \$10 million more in additional annual revenue to fully fund our current sport offerings at a necessary level. Finally, the funding issue is only one part of the equation and it does not address the Title IX challenges.

Whose decision was it to recommend the cutting of sports?

In April, the Board of Regents charged UNM Athletics with developing a sustainable financial model and to examine the elimination of sports. The Director of Athletics worked with a team of senior staff along with an outside consultant, to gather the relevant data and to analyze the available options. The Director presented the President with a recommendation, which is pending approval by the Board of Regents.

Why did this process take so long?

University and Athletics leadership has been as transparent as possible regarding both the challenges that we face and the potential solutions. While the process did take longer than expected, we erred on the side of thoroughness to explore any avenue that did not include eliminating sports.

What is a Roster Management Plan (RMP)?

An RMP will be initiated for men's cross country, men's indoor and outdoor track and swimming and diving, and involves managing the number of participants in a sport to keep costs down and to ensure Title IX compliance. Some scholarship and non-scholarship opportunities will be removed from select sport programs.

What are the Mountain West Conference implications of the reductions?

The Mountain West conference bylaws state that each member institution shall field varsity teams in football, women's volleyball, men's and women's basketball, as well as one women's team sport and additional men's and women's sports as prescribed by the NCAA to maintain Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) membership.

When was the last time UNM eliminated sports?

In 1999, UNM discontinued men's gymnastics, men's swimming and diving and wrestling, dropping UNM from 24 sports to 21.

What are the Title IX implications going forward? Is UNM in compliance?

Reference report at GoLobos.com/TitleIX.

Was this the only option? Could you have accomplished savings in other ways?

Great care and thought was put into the evaluation process. The goal was to achieve the necessary savings by cutting expenses across the department and pursuing new revenue sources. Unfortunately, these efforts are not enough, and the elimination of sports is the only option to fully address the financial and Title IX concerns that we face. We evaluated several options that did not involve eliminating a sport but those options cannot put us on a path to stability and continued Title IX compliance.

Could you have added a women's sport to remain compliant with Title IX?

The reality is that continued expansion of our athletics program is not feasible in this financial climate. UNM Athletics struggles to support the existing sports we have, including providing our student-athletes with adequate scholarship opportunities, facilities and equipment.

Why don't you just cut the football program to save money and balance the budget?

Out of the \$2.2M in Conference Distribution, 88% is attributed to football programs (College Football Playoff, Football Championship Game and TV revenue)

- This money goes to the department—not just the football team—to aid all sports.
- UNM is one of the Original members of the MWC (1999); we were chosen because of Football and Basketball
- UNM Football has been around since 1892 (20 years before NM became a State) and is the oldest sport at UNM.
- Exposure – National and Regional Exposure for the University and the State of New Mexico
 - UNM has averaged 11.3 appearances per year
 - 3.7 appearance average Nationally
 - 5.8 appearance average Regionally
- Multi Media Rights agreement would be significantly lower revenue if we did not have football.
- Field Naming Rights and Stadium/ Pit Naming (Dreamstyle) would not be possible – over \$900K/year
- Lobo Club Donations would also decrease over \$500K
- Game Guarantees can range from \$700K to \$1.0 annually for the department (Texas AM and LSU both agreed to \$1.6M)
- Ticket Revenue would considerably decrease with less desirable opponents.
- Dropping from an FBS to FCS would be a significant financial change.
 - We no longer would be associated with the MWC - it will no longer receive the financial amount they currently do
 - All our other sports would suffer as well; financially and competitively
 - Travel Cost Increase
 - Financially we would still spend the same amount to travel and probably more depending on the conference (only regional conference is the Big Sky Conf).
 - Conference Opponents would be less desirable for home games
 - NMSU would likely assume UNM place in the MWC.

- Contractual buyouts of contracted guaranteed football games (ex. Wisconsin, USC, Texas AM, LSU)

What are the benefits of maintaining a Division I football program?

- Football makes provides more revenue for DI athletics programs than any other sport— sometimes more than all other sports combined.
- UNM’s football program, along with men’s basketball, has historically, been the mainstay of the UNM athletic department’s financial viability. Between big game fee guarantees (often in the range of \$800,000 per game), and donor support, UNM football has been a main driver of the department’s revenue stream.
- Not taken into account are the ways football brings in money that feeds the whole athletic department: external giving (fundraising, sponsorships, endowments), NCAA Revenue Distribution and Conference Revenue Distribution.
- Investment –In FBS programs, football revenue has been invested in all sports, men and women. The money is spent to equally fund medical, sport performance, nutrition, publicity services to all teams. Football revenue also ensures that operating budgets are sufficient for recruiting, equipment and supplies, having competitive schedules, fully funding (NCAA Maximum Grants) all teams, providing quality housing and meals on campus and travel and per diem allowances. The money that is generated by football simply does not go back into football only and never has over the years.
 1. Most donors that are capable of giving large donations may give money for a specific project or facility in a sport other than football, but they typically do it because they have given to football.
 2. Academic centers, Nutrition Centers, Strength Training Facilities are facilities that are predominately paid for by supporters of football, but they benefit all student-athletes.
- Finances
 1. Approximately \$1,000,000 is paid in tuition to the University for all football student’s tuition scholarships. The institution would no longer receive these funds if football was discontinued.
 2. Football has the 2nd highest endowments (behind Track & Field)
 3. Football has 6 endowments totaling \$304,152.81

Considerations if UNM Football is Discontinued

- University of New Mexico will no longer be in the Mountain West Conference
 1. Loss of Conference Distribution due to TV agreement associated with Football (\$2.2 million)
 2. Conference affiliation will not be desirable
 3. Require more subsidies from the University
 4. On-going commitment to re-occurring money is simply not there
- Need to look at potential other Conference opportunities (WCC, etc.)

1. Smaller conferences will have minimal, if any, financial benefits
 2. Going to another conference could increase travel for all other sports
 3. Going to another conference could affect Men's Basketball as it will more than likely we would go to a lesser basketball conference
- Leaving the Mountain West Conference will open the door to New Mexico State, who will be the **ONLY DIVISION I Football Program** in the state, to replace UNM in MWC
 - Depending on the year of discontinuing the sport the following items need to be considered
 1. Coaches Contract buyout –
 - A. Most Asst. Coaches have 2-year contracts
 - B. Head Coach has 3 years remaining on his contract
 2. Contractual Agreements with Guarantee Games in future years.
 - A. UNM will have breach of contract issues for not being able to field a Division I team with all non-conference opponents
 - B. UNM will have to reimburse all agreements that we have received up front guarantee money (Texas A&M, LSU, etc.)
 - Facility
 1. What will happen with Dreamstyle Stadium (Football) – Future Plans
 - A. Facility maintenance and upkeep will still be necessary
 - B. Current naming rights have the stadium as part of the naming rights package if this facility is no longer in use will Dreamstyle request money back from naming rights?
 2. Tow Diem Football Facility – What will become of the Football Offices
 - A. Potentially repurpose but does not truly meet the functional needs of the department
 3. Weight Room could be repurposed for other sports
 4. Training Room would remain in its current location