



Independent Assessment of Return to Play Considerations
for Simon Fraser University Football Program

FINAL REPORT

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Chapter 1: Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

On 11 May 2023, Simon Fraser University ('SFU') announced that it had retained McLaren Global Sport Solutions ('MGSS') and appointed Bob Copeland, Senior Vice-President at MGSS, as Special Advisor to the President "to review options and search for a sustainable way forward"¹ for the football program. The decision to appoint a Special Advisor followed the termination of football on 4 April 2023 and subsequent calls to reinstate the program by SFU alumni, students, parents, the broader Canadian football community, and other community stakeholders.

This Report and its findings represent an independent and objective assessment of return to play considerations as outlined in the Terms of Reference. The evidence relied upon as the basis of this Report has been independently requested, collected, collated, and examined without bias or partiality. MGSS and its Special Advisor operated in complete independence from Simon Fraser University in the writing of this Report, and as a condition of their mandate, were granted the right to publish the Report at their unfettered discretion.

The feasibility of different league options was considered by the Special Advisor including the National Collegiate Athletic Association ('NCAA'), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics ('NAIA'), and U SPORTS/Canada West Athletics Conference ('Canada West'). There is a clear preference amongst SFU football alumni that U SPORTS/Canada West offers the best fit for SFU football, a viewpoint supported by several players who were members of the 2022 SFU football team.

What quickly became apparent at the outset of the Special Advisor's work is that this is not just a football issue to be solved. A sustainable way forward for the football program has broader

¹ Simon Fraser University, "SFU announces Special Advisor for football review, to begin immediately," 11 May 2023. Online: [SFU announces Special Advisor for football review, to begin immediately - SFU News - Simon Fraser University](#) [Last Accessed: 17 July 2023].

implications for the Department of Athletics and Recreation (the 'Department') and the University including financial sustainability and capacity issues, among others. The potentiality of SFU football competing in U SPORTS/Canada West while the remaining varsity teams continue in the NCAA Division II raises several important questions and limitations that must be addressed. For example, competing under two different governance structures will require additional investments including staffing and facility upgrades. Student-athletes would be subject to markedly different rules and opportunities which has the potential to negatively impact culture within the Department. Program equity concerning how varsity sports are supported at SFU emerged as an important theme amongst staff and this must be carefully considered as it relates to how football is supported and operated moving forward.

There is not a clear, unincumbered path for the reinstatement of SFU football involving an application to U SPORTS/Canada West or the NAIA given the membership policies that preclude entry in a single sport. In Canada, both U SPORTS and Canada West require SFU to initiate a formal application process for an exemption to current policies to be considered. In the NAIA, an exemption to a rule that requires participation in a minimum of six NAIA sports has never been granted.

Many impacts of reinstating SFU football are identified in this Report, including those associated with the potential for operating under different governing structures (e.g. U SPORTS and the NCAA Division II ('DII')). The impact of football's potential reinstatement on structural, capacity, and culture issues in the Department identified in this Report must be assessed by SFU as it relates to the feasibility of reinstating football.

Discontinuance of SFU Football in the Lone Star Conference

The Lone Star Conference ('LSC') of the NCAA made a decision not to renew SFU's affiliate membership agreement in the sport of football commencing in 2024. Following that decision, SFU terminated its football program and explained its decision as follows:

“With the recent announcement that the team has not been invited to continue in the Lone Star Conference, we do not have a conference to play in beginning in 2024. The ongoing uncertainty creates an unacceptable experience for students. The university has carefully considered all available options and as a leadership team we concluded that football is no longer a feasible sport for SFU.”²

On 23 January 2023, the Commissioner of the LSC informed SFU that it would be unilaterally ending its affiliate agreement following the 2024 season. The decision was based on several factors including an assessment of the optimal number of football members in the conference given the addition of another university to the LSC in 2024. The LSC advised SFU that “we decided that 10 was the optimal sponsorship number for scheduling, travel, nonconference opportunities, and championship access.”³ To offer the optimal number of ten teams, the LSC only needed to renew agreements with two of the current three affiliates, and provided the following rationale for ending its relationship with SFU:

“After evaluating travel distance, travel costs, accessibility, and the competitive history of all three programs, we ultimately decided to renew with Central Washington and Western Oregon, and not with Simon Fraser.”⁴

According to a 2022 Benchmark and Scan Report of the Department, “Football Travel Expenses at SFU are 2.1 times higher on average each year from 2016 to 2020.”⁵ Furthermore, these travel expenses grew even higher during the team’s only season in the LSC and had an impact on student-athletes on the team. According to one SFU player, “The Lone Star Conference was not ideal due to the travel, and having to play in Blaine was unfortunate.” Beyond the football team’s lack of competitive success, SFU’s Canadian geography clearly factored into the LSC’s decision.

Before announcing the termination of the program, the “available options” referred to in President Johnson’s statement included the NCAA, the NAIA, and Canada West, a regional

² Simon Fraser University, “President's Statement: SFU’s varsity football program comes to an end,” 4 April, 2023. Online: [President's Statement: SFU’s varsity football program comes to an end - Simon Fraser University Athletics](#) [Last Accessed: 17 July 2023].

³ Lone Star Conference, “Email communication to Theresa Hanson,” 23 January 2023.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

association of U SPORTS. According to SFU officials, the University was advised by the NCAA that moving to Division I ('DI') or Division III ('DIII') was not possible under NCAA regulations, and no feasible options remained in Division II.

Given the lack of opportunities to continue to play football in the NCAA, SFU officials contacted the NAIA, U SPORTS, and Canada West to enquire about the opportunity for football membership. SFU officials were apprised that the membership rules of these organizations would preclude SFU football from being accepted without other sports being added. It is important to note that this was the second time in two years that SFU football was forced out of an NCAA DII conference. Following the 2021 season, football was discontinued in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference ('GNAC') which resulted in the team joining the LSC.

The primary explanation communicated by SFU to justify the decision to end its football program was the absence of a league to play in and the ongoing uncertainty that would persist, even if the program continued to compete in the LSC for its final year in 2023. No other motives were shared publicly about the decision to end the program. Many people speculated that other contributing factors led to the decision including a longstanding intention to "get rid of football", financial pressures in the Department, and the lack of competitive success.

Financial Motives

Financial motives were a contributing factor in the decision to end the football program, supported by the following statement: "It is likely that this decision, combined with the financial review, will lead to eliminating football from SFU's athletics experience."⁶ The "financial review"⁷ refers to an internal document called the 2022 Athletics and Recreation Review ('2022 Review') that includes a five-year financial summary of the Department between Fiscal Year ('FY') 2016-17 and 2020-21. Further discussion about the financial health of the Department is provided in Chapter 2.5: 'Finances and Capacity.'

⁶ Simon Fraser University, "Confidential, For Issues Management," (Internal University Document Released via Freedom of Information Request), 30 January 2023

⁷ Simon Fraser University, "2022 Athletics and Recreation Review," 14 February, 2022.

In addition to the 2022 Review, the University commissioned a Benchmark and Scan Report ('Benchmarking Report') of SFU Athletics prepared by Deloitte, the purpose of which is "to provide a Benchmarking and Scan Report of comparator institutions' athletics and campus recreation departments. The Benchmarking Report includes the full contents of the collected and combined data, as well as several key analysis points."⁸ The Department was compared to an NCAA Comparator Group of eight institutions as well as an Institutional Peer Group of six institutions, including two Canadian universities. Highlights of this Benchmarking Report are provided in Chapter 2.5: 'Finances and Capacity.'

The Department is in a precarious financial situation and has been plagued by a structural budget deficit for several years. This is a critical factor that must be taken into consideration as it relates to the resumption of football. Enhanced fundraising from external sources including donations, sponsorship, and special events will be required to position SFU football for success and sustainability.

Although financial motives were not the primary impetus for the program's termination, they were a contributing factor. This was confirmed through interviews with SFU officials, including staff in the Department. Financial headwinds have been a growing concern and it is entirely plausible that to address the growing deficit, the Department would have been forced to look at all options including potential varsity team program cuts as early as the 2024-25 season had football not been eliminated. In some respects, football represents "the canary in the coalmine" illustrative of the deteriorating financial health and capacity of the Department.

⁸ Deloitte Development LLC, "Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report," September 2022.

Other Motives – “Get Rid of Football”

Various individuals have made claims that the Department had a longstanding desire to “get rid of the football program,” intimating that the termination of the program is merely a fulfillment of this prophecy. However, the Special Advisor found no evidence to support this claim. A Department review of football in 2017 led to additional resources committed to make the program more competitive. Sizable investments in football-related facilities have also been made including a University contribution of \$10M towards the stadium, approximately \$2M in upgrades to the football locker room and related facilities, and increases in scholarship funding.

Legal Proceedings and Injunction Application⁹

Following SFU’s announcement to end the football program an application was made to the Supreme Court of British Columbia for an interim injunction to reverse the decision.¹⁰ The application was made on behalf of Gideone Kremler, and four other student-athletes who were members of the SFU football team. In *Kremler*,¹¹ the Plaintiffs filed a notice of civil claim against SFU alleging breach of contracts and negligent misrepresentation in connection with SFU’s termination of its varsity football program.

The Plaintiffs sought an interlocutory order enjoining the Defendant (‘SFU’) from discontinuing its football program for the 2023 season.¹² This included an order to reinstate all student-athletes who were part of the SFU program as of 4 April 2023; an order reinstating all coaching personnel who were part of the football program as of 4 April 2023 and reinstatement of all coaching personnel contracts immediately; an order that SFU take all reasonable steps to in good faith make applications to a university football conference in Canada or the United States to allow the football program to compete within that conference for the 2023 season; and, alternatively, an

⁹ **IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, Gideone Kremler, Kimo Hiu, Andrew Lirag, Ryan Barthelson, and Dayton Ingenhaag v. Simon Fraser University** Before: The Honourable Justice Stephens **Reasons for Judgement**, 11 May 2023.

¹⁰ *Kremler v. Simon Fraser University* 2023 BCSC 805 [*Kremler*].

¹¹ *Ibid* at para 17.

¹² *Ibid* at para 22.

order that SFU take all reasonable steps to ensure that the football program continues independently from a university football conference in Canada or the United States.¹³

The court used the higher threshold for an interlocutory injunction that was articulated in *R. v. Canadian Broadcasting Corp.*¹⁴ The first step of the test differs from that of a standard interlocutory injunction. It requires that the plaintiff show a strong *prima facie* case. A strong *prima facie* case means that upon preliminary review the application judge would be satisfied that there is a strong likelihood that the applicant will be successful at trial.

The court found that the Plaintiffs did not meet the onerous standard for a mandatory injunction of a strong *prima facie* case.¹⁵ Justice Stephens held that the injunction was too vague and established law would not enable the court to grant such a vague and imprecise injunction order.¹⁶ The court recognized the Plaintiffs' disappointment but found that the legal test was not satisfied by the Plaintiffs and the notice of application for injunction was dismissed.¹⁷

Competitive Football Opportunities in 2023

The feasibility of providing a competitive experience — exhibition games or controlled scrimmages — for returning players in 2023 was explored by the Special Advisor under the Terms of Reference. A memorandum was issued to the SFU Executive on 9 June 2023 (Appendix A: 'Evaluate Support for Competitive Exhibition Games in 2023') that was subsequently released publicly by SFU. The memorandum concluded that "it does not appear to be feasible to stage either exhibition games or controlled scrimmages in 2023."

¹³ *Ibid* at para 22.

¹⁴ *R. v. Canadian Broadcasting Corp.*, 2018 SCC 5 at para 15.

¹⁵ *Supra* note 10 at para 47.

¹⁶ *Ibid* at para 58.

¹⁷ *Ibid* at para 73.

SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation Capacity and Financial Sustainability

The discontinuance of football has laid bare a plethora of issues currently facing the Department including legitimate concerns by staff about the Department's capacity to support its current programming (Chapter 2: 'Department of Athletics and Recreation'). Before football's cancellation, the Department was facing a structural budget deficit as high as \$1.77M that had been growing over the past several years. According to one staff member, "the Department cannot make strategic decisions at this time; we are handcuffed by the budget."

Financial sustainability is one of many important issues currently facing the Department. The lack of effective strategic planning also is a concern as is the lack of systematic evaluation of varsity programs and staff. Coaches are unsure about how they and their programs are evaluated; there is a lack of common understanding of what and how Key Performance Indicators ('KPIs') are relied upon as the basis for evaluation. Together, these deficiencies are contributing factors to many of the current issues and uncertainty faced by the Department. This uncertainty makes it difficult to make decisions about football in a silo because these decisions will have material long-term impacts on the Department and its culture. For these reasons, SFU must contemplate the impact of the current financial and operational uncertainty in the Department as it relates to return to play decisions and timing for football.

The SFU Football Alumni Society

The SFU Football Alumni Society (the 'Society') has lobbied to reinstate football and has mobilized community support for the program including pledges totaling \$3M over five years and additional fundraising commitments. The Society has provided ongoing guidance to SFU student-athletes and others since the program was terminated on 4 April 2023. The extent of the effort to reinstate football includes an injunction filed in the B.C. Supreme Court by the Society on behalf of players on the team against SFU — which proved unsuccessful. The Society remains committed to supporting the reinstatement of football at SFU and has actively consulted in good faith with the Special Advisor.

Impacts

The decision to end the football program has had a multitude of negative impacts on student-athletes, staff, and the broader SFU community which are summarized in Chapter 4 and discussed throughout this Report. These impacts have been felt most acutely by student-athletes and coaches on the football team, but staff in the Department have also reported being harassed and marginalized as a result of the decision and how it was communicated. The decision has been intensely polarizing including those who support the reinstatement of the football team and others who support the University's decision to end the program. According to one staff member, "This experience has turned coach against coach, student-athlete against student-athlete, and forced everyone to pick a side." As a result, morale in the Department is "at an all-time low" according to a staff member. Moreover, since the announcement on 4 April 2023, several senior staff members in the Department have left SFU, including the Senior Director of Athletics and Recreation, the Associate Director of Finance and Administration, and the Head Coach of Strength and Conditioning.

The University has suffered a reputational crisis resulting from the decision that has prompted some alumni to sever their relationship with the institution. Local and national football organizations including the Canadian Football League ('CFL') and Football Canada have weighed in about the negative repercussions on the football ecosystem in Canada if the program is not reinstated.

1.2 Terms of Reference for this Report

The Terms of Reference are as follows.

1. Provide an independent assessment regarding the viability of resuming an inter-university football program at SFU in 2024 or later.
2. Evaluate support for competitive exhibition game opportunities for SFU football student-athletes in 2023 as a means of transitioning to a potential new operating model and league in 2024.
3. Invite the participation of SFU football stakeholders in the Football Review including, but not limited to, the following:

- Current SFU football student-athletes;
 - Student-athlete representatives from the SFU Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC);
 - Simon Fraser Students' Society (SFSS) and other student groups;
 - SFU employee groups as requested;
 - SFU Football Alumni Association representatives, athletics alumni, and other alumni;
 - Football program benefactors;
 - SFU senior leadership;
 - Athletics Department leadership, coaches, and staff; and
 - Other affected SFU community members who wish to participate in the process.
4. Initiate a dialogue with selected football governing bodies to explore the feasibility and requirements of SFU football being granted membership status. For example, this shall include U SPORTS, Canada West Athletics Conference, NAIA, and other organizations that may be identified.
 5. Seek the perspectives of other football stakeholders in Canada including the Canadian Football League, Football Canada, and others that may be identified.
 6. Identify Key Performance Indicators related to operating a competitive inter-university football program at SFU that provides an exceptional student-athlete experience.
 7. Analyse the recent operating budgets for SFU football and assess future program investments required to operate a competitive and sustainable inter-university football program at SFU.
 8. Identify the impacts and support related to offering an inter-university football program at SFU.
 9. Issue a final report to SFU outlining key findings and options for SFU to consider related to the reinstatement of inter-university football. MGSS will also issue a public report on its website.

1.3 Consultation Process

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to inform this Report including personal interviews, group meetings, and surveys. The Special Advisor conducted more than 100 meetings involving approximately 240 individuals. In-person group meetings were conducted with the football team, Department staff, and the SFU Football Alumni Society. The football team meeting and Department staff meetings also included participants via Zoom and it

was apparent with the former meeting platform that several parents and other supporters were present. The constituencies who provided information to inform this Report include the following:

- SFU students including football and non-football student-athletes;
- SFU alumni including SFU Football Alumni Society and others not affiliated with football;
- Former SFU football coaches;
- Parents of SFU football players;
- Department of Athletics and Recreation staff;
- Other non-athletics staff and faculty representing various SFU departments;
- SFU senior leadership;
- Local and national football organizations including the Canadian Junior Football League/British Columbia Conference, UBC Department of Athletics, BC Secondary School Football Association, BC Lions Football Club, Canadian Football League, Canadian Football League Players Association, and Football Canada;
- Sport governing bodies including U SPORTS, Canada West, the NCAA, and the NAIA; and
- Other, including a Canadian University President; an Athletic Director of an NAIA football school; and twelve current or former Directors of Athletics, football coaches, and senior administrators affiliated with U SPORTS.

Interview subjects were assured of confidentiality unless otherwise waived. Two web-based surveys (Appendix B: ‘Football Student-Athlete Survey Results’; Appendix C: ‘Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff Survey Results’) were implemented using a platform called Qualtrics Experience Management. Survey respondents were assured of confidentiality.

1.4 Key Findings

League Options for Football

1. Competitive inequities and uncertainty associated with SFU football’s participation in the United States have been demonstrated over the program’s history across multiple conferences — leading to the conclusion that a competitive football program operating in the United States is not feasible or sustainable. Continuing to field a football team in the United States that is not competitive is inconsistent with four of the Department’s five pillars of the 2022 strategic mandate including student-athlete success, reputation, organizational culture, and financial sustainability.

2. NCAA membership rules, including interpretations provided by the NCAA, preclude SFU football from becoming a member of either the NCAA Division I or Division III.

3. The NAIA is not a feasible option for SFU football including membership rules that preclude SFU football from becoming a member without meeting other minimum sport requirements.

4. SFU football has the potential to build a competitive and sustainable program in Canada through membership in Canada West and U SPORTS. This emerged as a strong theme amongst SFU football alumni and many others who consider Canada West and U SPORTS to be the optimal fit for SFU football.

5. One of the most important non-financial advantages of playing in Canada is the operational certainty of competing in a conference that has exhibited a long history of stability. SFU football would not be disadvantaged in Canada as it has been in the United States where conferences have either folded or, in the LSC experience, SFU was not renewed in favor of another U.S. school that was considered more operationally convenient.

6. Membership rules in Canada West and U SPORTS preclude membership in only one sport. As a result, SFU must initiate an application and request an exemption from existing rules. Such an exemption would require two-thirds support from U SPORTS members and seventy-five percent support from Canada West members.¹⁸ Any alternative to a one-sport exemption would require SFU to repatriate some or all of its NCAA varsity sports to U SPORTS.

7. The application fees required by U SPORTS and Canada West total \$368,000. These one-time fees may be prohibitive given the structural operating budget deficit in the Department and would require additional external fundraising or University support.

8. If an application to Canada West and U SPORTS is successful, a return to play earlier than 2025 is highly unlikely given the rigorous application requirements and timelines outlined in the new member application processes set forth by both organizations.

“Canada’s NCAA Team”

9. There are significant impediments to finding a football-only solution that would require the Department to service and support student-athletes in two different governing bodies, those being the NCAA DII and U SPORTS/Canada West.

10. SFU is at a competitive disadvantage in its ability to recruit U.S. student-athletes, which may be one reason why U.S. recruits represent only 10% of SFU student-athletes in 2023.

¹⁸ U SPORTS and Canada West each have their own member application procedures but indicated they would consider streamlining some of these processes in the event of an SFU application.

11. SFU's 2022 fall enrollment included a total of 5,133 international undergraduate students of which 81 (1.6%) were citizens of the United States¹⁹. These enrollment statistics demonstrate that SFU's international recruiting efforts are focused on markets in India, China, and other overseas markets more so than the United States. Therefore, the impact of the Department's membership in the NCAA DII on SFU's international recruitment efforts is marginal at best.

12. The competitive and philosophical congruity between U SPORTS and the NCAA DII begs the question as to what is the value proposition for SFU's participation in the NCAA DII in 2023? This question was explored with many individuals but was very difficult for those in the SFU community to answer. Several individuals at SFU have questioned the value proposition of SFU varsity teams competing in the United States. Those individuals believe this question must be answered through rigorous analysis and University-wide consultation. Furthermore, the Deloitte Benchmarking Report referred to the Department's status as the only NCAA institution in Canada as "SFU's most challenging factor."

Impacts of a Dual Governance Model (NCAA DII and U SPORTS)

13. A dual governance model to accommodate the singular participation of football in U SPORTS and all other SFU varsity sports in the NCAA DII is an inefficient model that would add incremental costs to the operation of football.

14. Student-athletes would be subject to markedly different rules and opportunities which has the potential to negatively impact culture within the Department. Program equity concerns about how varsity sports are supported at SFU emerged as an important theme amongst staff and this must be carefully considered as it relates to how football is supported and operated moving forward.

15. The implications of football's participation in U SPORTS on SFU's brand as "Canada's NCAA Team" must be assessed by the University before contemplating an application to Canada West and U SPORTS for membership in the sport of football.

16. If football is granted membership in Canada West and U SPORTS, the current turf field must be expanded to accommodate larger Canadian field dimensions. This may require removal or reconfiguration of the surrounding track which has implications for the SFU track and field teams.

Department of Athletics and Recreation

17. The operations of the Department of Athletics and Recreation are not sustainable in their current form, a finding consistent with a 2022 Benchmarking Report by Deloitte that indicated "a strong sense of urgency in financial viability"²⁰ for the Department. A prolonged structural deficit

¹⁹ Email to the Special Advisor, SFU Student Recruitment and Admissions, 18 August 2023.

²⁰ Deloitte Development LLC, "Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report," September 2022.

has been apparent and growing for several years that portends future program cuts if additional sources of funding are not secured.

18. The capacity to effectively support and service all varsity student-athletes including medical and therapy services, academic advising, mental health counseling, and financial aid (athletic scholarships) has been stretched in recent years according to Department staff and feedback from football student-athletes. More than half of the staff²¹ (52%, n=34) described the capacity of the Department as “Poor” or “Terrible” compared with three individuals (6.5%, n=3) who described the capacity as “Good” or “Excellent.”

19. The structural budget deficit in the Department was a contributing factor in the decision to end the football program precipitated by the unilateral decision by the Lone Star Conference not to renew its affiliation agreement with SFU.

20. The Department currently operates without a strategic plan. The lack of effective strategic planning in the Department is a concern, as is the lack of systematic evaluation of varsity programs and staff. Some coaches are unsure about how they and their programs are evaluated.

21. Specific strategic mandates within the Department have fallen short, including organizational culture and financial sustainability. Staff have spoken loudly and clearly about capacity issues in the Department which, in turn, have impacted organizational culture. Several staff and coaches raised concerns about perceived inequities in how varsity programs are funded which has further exacerbated issues related to culture as well as negative perceptions towards football.

22. There is a lack of common understanding of what and how Key Performance Indicators (‘KPIs’) are relied upon as the basis for evaluation and varsity program accountability. Most striking is the absence of KPIs to assess the student-athlete experience including no formalized mechanisms for student-athletes to provide feedback about their team, coaches, or other services. This is atypical of most high-performance university athletics programs in Canada. A process to elicit this feedback regularly from student-athletes is vital to identify potential issues and opportunities associated with their athletics experience.

23. The operating uncertainty in the Department makes it difficult to make decisions about football in a silo because these decisions will have material long-term impacts on the Department and its culture. For these reasons, SFU must contemplate the impact of the current financial and operational uncertainty in the Department as it relates to return to play decisions and timing for football.

24. SFU had a total of 388 student-athletes (57% male; 43% female) with football included. Without football, the total student-athlete population decreased by 25% and changed the percentage of male athletes from 57% of the total to 43%. In 2023, female student-athletes now represent 57% of all varsity sport participants. The impact of football’s loss on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (‘EDI’) requires strategic review.

²¹ Note: The Department survey included responses from staff in both athletics and recreation units.

Football Student-Athlete Experience

25. Almost 60% of student-athletes on the SFU football team who were surveyed described their overall student-athlete experience as “Average” (18%), “Poor” (29%), or “Terrible” (18%).

26. Almost 80% of student-athletes surveyed described the SFU football program as “Much worse” (48%) or “Somewhat worse” (30%) compared to NCAA DII counterparts. Less than a quarter (22%) of respondents consider the SFU football program on par with their NCAA DII peers, and no one considered the SFU football program to be “Somewhat better” or “Much better.”

27. The Department has not been effective in fulfilling its strategic mandate to “Champion the Student-Athlete Experience” and its objective to “Plan for student-athletes to win in the classroom, in competition & in the community” as it pertains to football.

Football Funding

28. A collaborative funding model that relies on multiple revenue sources (University, student fees, alumni, business/community) offers the most sustainable approach for SFU football. Base funding through SFU including student ancillary fees can be augmented through private donations and more aggressive fundraising targets including sponsorship and other forms of business development.

29. Total scholarship disbursements to football in 2016-17 were \$294,598 including \$200,000 in base funding from SFU. Total athletic scholarship disbursements to football in 2022 were \$438,250, representing an increase of 49% between 2016 and 2022. SFU-based funding of scholarships increased by 33% over this period to \$300,000.

30. The SFU Football Alumni Society announced \$3M in total pledges from 800 donors — contingent on the reinstatement of football at SFU. The bulk of these pledges (\$2.5M) are from a very limited number of donors. These investments are projected over five years and can be used to provide the incremental support required to sustain the football program.

31. The SFU Board of Governors voted to cut the football and track programs in 1982 as part of a “sweeping package of budget cuts and fee hikes aimed at eliminating Simon Fraser University’s projected recurring budget deficit.” However, football and track were saved through the introduction of the University’s first-ever Recreation-Athletics Fee of \$6.00 per student. Today, 70% of the total funding for the Department is provided through an ancillary Recreation-Athletics student fee of \$84.94 per term.²²

²² SFU, “Fall 2023 Calendar.” Online: <http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2023/fall/fees-and-regulations/tuition-fees/undergraduate.html#domestic> [Last Accessed: 19 August 2023].

Chapter 2: Department of Athletics and Recreation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter includes an overview of the structure of the Department of Athletics and Recreation (the ‘Department’) to provide the necessary operational and financial context to decisions regarding football. A systematic review of the Department is not included in the Terms of Reference for this Report. However, several important issues in the Department made it apparent that some review was required to assess the feasibility and timing as it concerns the reinstatement of football at SFU. These issues are highlighted by a significant and growing structural budget deficit in the Department and a lack of capacity which emerged as important themes amongst staff (Appendix C: ‘Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff Survey Results’).

2.2 Organizational Structure

The Department is a unit of SFU Student Services and reports to the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Students. This type of model that combines the operations of both varsity athletics and campus recreation is not unusual in Canada but would be considered an anomaly in the United States. According to the Deloitte Benchmarking Report, “SFU currently maintains an athletic and campus recreation reporting structure that is more akin to U Sport institutions, where the programs maintain some shared reporting lines and resources.”²³ Because SFU participates in the NCAA DII, the integrated operations for varsity athletics and campus recreation make benchmarking difficult in some cases. This includes the collection of a single combined fee for varsity athletics and recreation. The following comment from the Benchmarking Report illustrates this point.

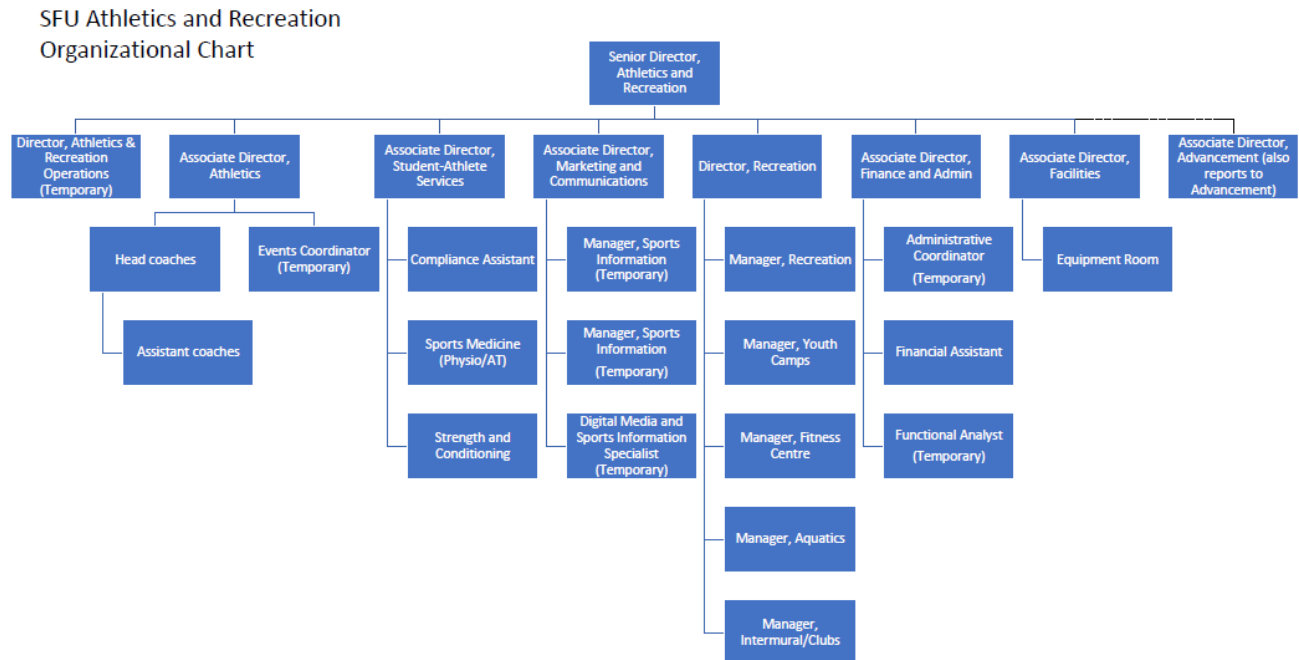
“...Unlike their comparators, SFU assesses Student Fees via a combined varsity sports/campus recreation fee and reports the athletics portion of the funds as direct institutional funding. In addition to creating opportunity for realizing more funds, separately collecting and reporting

²³ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

varsity/campus recreation fees likely results in a clearer understanding of the athletics funding model.”²⁴

Despite the lack of clarity on how the integrated fee is allocated, the combined operations of athletics and recreation offer many operational efficiencies, and splitting these functions would result in higher costs. However, the Special Advisor agrees with the Deloitte assessment that greater clarity in how the fee itself is collected and reported would be beneficial. This delineation can also help provide a basis for strategic funding decisions.

The current organizational chart²⁵ for the Department is provided below.



The Associate Director of Athletics is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of all varsity sports including the supervision and evaluation of coaches. The three largest functional units in athletics are Student-Athlete Services, Marketing and Communications, and Finance and Administration. Each of these units is led by an Associate Director who reports to the Senior Director of Athletics

²⁴ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

²⁵ SFU, “SFU Athletics and Recreation Organizational Chart,” 31 July 2023.

and Recreation. There are several cross-functional positions that support both athletics and recreation including Athletics and Recreation Operations, Finance and Administration, Facilities, Advancement, and Marketing and Communications. The cross-functional responsibilities associated with this integrated model illustrate how it is difficult, but not impossible, to precisely delineate what portion of the athletics and recreation fee is allocated to athletics versus recreation functions.

A common refrain amongst staff is that the Department does not have the capacity to adequately support and service a sport model that includes football. For example, one staff member expressed the following:

“As a staff, at many levels, we are just barely able to function with football in operation. The large roster and coaching staff size puts a strain on our entire institution. Sports med, communications and marketing, and academic resources cannot function in an effective manner with football. We are strained at the best of times.”

Shortcomings in these — and other areas — including athletic therapy, strength and conditioning, tutoring, and meals have been raised by staff, coaches, and student-athletes. Deficiencies in these areas are cause for concern related to the student-athlete experience and are not conducive to a high-performance athletics program. For example, SFU staff indicate that the Department should have a total complement of 11 athletic therapists²⁶ to properly service a population of 388 student-athletes (including football), but the Department operates with three (3) full-time athletic therapists and another two (2) on ten month contracts. The therapy demands of the football program alone require three (3) to four (4) therapists to service the team which accounted for a quarter of all treatments in the SFU sports medicine clinic in 2022-23.²⁷

Football is singled out by staff because of the unique and unprecedented situation the program is in, the size of the program, and the perception amongst staff that capacity issues are solved with football’s demise. This, of course, is unfair to the football program and does not address the need

²⁶ Note: The recommended number of athletic therapists is based on guidelines provided by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association.

²⁷ Note: In 2022-23 the SFU Sports Medicine Clinic provided 6,000 treatment visits for varsity student-athletes, including 1,500 treatments visits for football.

for a comprehensive review of the entire Department to assess all programs objectively and systematically on an equal footing using a common set of KPIs.

Some staff believe that football budget revenues can be redistributed to shore up other varsity programs that are under-resourced; however, the structural deficit of the Department exceeds football revenues, thus there would be no net new revenues to reallocate. However, capacity issues noted in areas including athletic therapy and strength and conditioning would be solved with close to one hundred (100) fewer student-athletes to service. Thus, the existing staff complement in these areas would go further. It is entirely possible that if additional revenues are not generated to support student-athlete success, more program cuts could be necessary.

Capacity issues emerged as a strong theme amongst staff in the Department and additional staffing investments would be necessary to operate a football program that is competitive and sustainable as noted in Chapter 3.7: 'SFU Football Sustainability.' For example, if football is granted entry into Canada West and U SPORTS, it would be necessary to address staffing needs in compliance, advancement (fundraising), athletic therapy, and strength and conditioning.

In recent months, several staff in the Department have departed SFU, including some in senior leadership positions. On 2 August 2023, the University announced that "Theresa Hanson, Senior Director, Athletics and Recreation, and SFU have come to mutual agreement that the time is right for a change in direction within Athletics and Recreation."²⁸ The Associate Director of Finance and Administration also recently departed as well as the Head Coach of Strength and Conditioning.

²⁸ SFU, "Changes within Athletics and Recreation," 2 August 2023. Online: <https://athletics.sfu.ca/news/2023/8/2/general-athletics-changes-within-athletics-and-recreation.aspx> [Last Accessed: 17 August 2023].

2.3 Sport Model and Membership Affiliations

Athletics and Recreation Sport Model

The Department offers a hierarchy of four levels of sport including: 1) Varsity Sport; 2) Competitive Sport Clubs; 3) Recreational Sport Clubs; and, 4) Intramurals and Physical Activity. Competitive sport clubs operate under the sport club model at SFU and may qualify for \$5,000 in Department funding. Some competitive sport clubs aspire to compete as a varsity sport on behalf of SFU such as Men’s Hockey. The Men’s Hockey program is privately funded with a budget of more than \$200,000 raised through donations and other team fundraising. The SFU hockey program has “been able to demonstrate competitive success against teams at the highest level — defeating both UBC and TWU Men’s Hockey (USports), falling to 7-time NCAA Division 1 national champion UND by a score of 4-3 in Burnaby, and most recently defeating NCAA Division 1 UAA 1-0 in Alaska this past year, a proud achievement for a club team.”²⁹ Those associated with the SFU Men’s Hockey team “Openly cheer for all sports at SFU, but we also believe our metrics viewed through the lens of minimal university funding demonstrate a significant opportunity for the university to invest more into supporting a hockey team.”³⁰ Although the Men’s Hockey team has been able to quantify several metrics, they acknowledge “We are not experts in the success metrics of varsity level athletics programs,” and “We believe the metrics we have already demonstrated to date stack up well against other sports.”³¹

The success of the Men’s Hockey Competitive Sport Club and their desire to become a varsity sport raises several important questions about the SFU Sport Model. What is the Department’s policy and process about adding new varsity sports — or dropping varsity sports for that matter? Are there specific KPIs that guide this process? If a varsity sport is added, will it be funded as are other varsity sports? The answers to these questions are unknown and the Special Advisor was told there are no such policies that govern how sports are dropped or added. Adding or dropping sports is commonplace in university athletics and may be done for a variety of reasons; ensuring a transparent process to add or drop sports will engender more clarity and trust in the process. This

²⁹ Email Correspondence to the Special Advisor, 6 June 2023.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

was lacking in the decision to drop football at SFU. The need for such a process at SFU is urgent and further exacerbated by the financial deficit in the Department. For example, if the number of varsity sports must be reduced at some point in the future, what is the process and what are the KPIs to inform such decisions?

SFU currently offers a total of 16 varsity sports for men and women as noted in the following chart.

SFU Varsity Sport Offerings

Men's Sports	Women's Sports	Co-ed Sports
Basketball	Basketball	Cross Country
Golf	Golf	Swimming
Soccer	Soccer	Track & Field
Wrestling	Wrestling	
	Softball	
	Volleyball	

Varsity Roster Summaries³²

Team	#Players	#International(U.S.)	#Coaches
M - Basketball	15	0	4
W - Basketball	16	3 (2)	3
M - Golf	8	0	4
W - Golf	10	1 (1)	4
M - Soccer	16	6 (1)	5
W - Soccer	22	0	4
M - Wrestling	21	8 (8)	4
W - Wrestling	21	7(7)	3
W - Softball	17	0	4
W - Volleyball	20	1 (1)	5
Cross Country	13 W	1 (1)	1

³² Note: Varsity roster summaries were compiled from SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation website and include 2023 rosters for all sports listed with the exception of football. Football roster statistics are compiled from the 2022 Football roster.

	20 M	3 (2)	
Swimming	13 W 15 M	3 (2) 3 (1)	3
Track & Field	33 W 31 M	2 (1) 4 (2)	4
Total (excluding football)	126 M 165 W	24 (14) 18 (15)	48
Football	96 M 1 W	26 (21)	13
Total (including football)	222 M 166 W	50 (35) 18 (15)	61

SFU had a total of 388 student-athletes (57% male; 43% female) with football included. Without football, the total student-athlete population decreased by 25% and changed the percentage of male athletes from 57% of the total to 43%. In 2023, female student-athletes now represent 57% of all varsity sport participants. The impact of football’s loss on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (‘EDI’) requires strategic review.

Without football, the total number of international student-athletes is reduced from 68 to 42. The number of international recruits varies considerably by team. For example, there are no international students listed on the 2023 rosters for Men’s Basketball, Men’s Golf, Women’s Soccer, and Women’s Softball. The largest percentage of international recruits is on Men’s Wrestling (38% of the total roster), followed by Men’s Soccer (37.5% of the total roster), Women’s Wrestling (33% of the total roster), and football (27% of the total roster).

SFU Conference Membership

SFU’s primary membership is in the NCAA DII GNAC which offers a limited number of sports — twelve in total. As a result, some of SFU’s teams including men’s and women’s wrestling and men’s and women’s swimming compete as associate members in the NCAA DII Rocky Mountain Athletics Conference (‘RMAC’). Following the 2021 season, the GNAC football conference was eliminated which forced the football program to look at alternatives, leading to an invitation to join the Lone Star Conference in 2022.



According to the NCAA, “Of the more than 1,100 NCAA member universities and colleges, about 300 classify their athletics programs in Division II.” Approximately 89% of DII schools have enrollments of fewer than 7,500 students, thus SFU is somewhat of an outlier based on its 31,900 undergraduate students and 5,736 graduate students. The NCAA touts DII as providing a more balanced approach to athletics and academics than DI and claims that “Among the most distinguishing features in Division II is its athletics scholarship model, which awards partial scholarships that students combine with academic and need-based grants to construct their financial aid package.”³³ SFU is at a competitive disadvantage in its ability to recruit U.S. student-athletes based on the DII scholarship model which may be one reason why U.S. recruits represent only 10% of SFU student-athletes in 2023.³⁴ SFU is disadvantaged in several ways including international tuition costs that cannot be fully offset by a partial scholarship, and tuition fee waivers offered by U.S. institutions that are not provided by SFU.

The operating requirements in the NCAA DII are much less rigorous than in DI, a reflection of the balanced approach espoused by the NCAA DII. For example, there are no attendance requirements for football or arena game requirements for basketball. There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a DII school must not exceed. DII teams usually feature several local or in-state student-athletes which is common at SFU. Many DII student-athletes pay for school through a combination of scholarship money, grants, student loans, and employment earnings. DII athletics programs are financed in the institution's budget like other academic departments on campus. Traditional rivalries with regional institutions dominate the schedules of many DII athletics programs according to the NCAA. However, SFU does not enjoy such traditional rivalries as the NCAA's only international member.

³³ NCAA, “Our Division II Story.” Online: <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/2/16/our-division-ii-story.aspx> [Last Accessed: 7 August 2023].

³⁴ Note: 2023 roster statistics indicate a total of 42 international student-athletes, of which 29 are from the U.S.

2.4 Strategic Planning and Key Performance Indicators ('KPIs')

Strategic Mandate

A 2022 review of the Department of Athletics and Recreation articulated the strategic mandate of the Department as follows:

- “Reputation: Inspire advocacy for student-athletes and healthy communities
- Student-Athlete Success: Champion the student-athlete experience
- Active Living: Engage our students and community in healthy and active living
- Organizational Culture: supporting people, processes, and performance
- Financial Sustainability: pursue financial resources for success”³⁵

How these strategic pillars are reflected in the planning, goal setting, and evaluation of varsity teams lacks clarity. For example, how does one measure to “Champion the student-athlete experience” and how is this strategic mandate operationalized? Specific strategic mandates within the Department have fallen short, including organizational culture and financial sustainability. Staff have spoken loudly and clearly about capacity issues in the Department which, in turn, have impacted organizational culture. Several staff and coaches raised concerns about perceived inequities in how varsity programs are funded which has further exacerbated issues related to organizational culture as well as negative perceptions towards football.

Staff have also raised issues about deficiencies in processes including insufficient performance reviews, lack of onboarding, and feeling marginalized (Appendix C: ‘Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff Survey Results’). These concerns should be addressed as part of a new strategic plan for the Department that is aligned with SFU’s new integrated planning framework.

³⁵ SFU, “2022 Athletics and Recreation Review,” 14 February 2022.

Department Strategic Plan 2016-2021

Between 2016 and 2021 the Department was guided by a strategic plan entitled “Unleashing Our Potential: A Strategic Plan for SFU Athletics & Recreation.” The purpose of the strategic plan was explained as follows:

“This strategic plan represents our refreshed and renewed commitment to creating a bright and exciting future for SFU Athletics and Recreation. In order for us to achieve our goals, we have to focus on **realizing our potential** and elevating our performance in all areas and on all levels. As we strive to better align Athletics & Recreation with SFU’s vision of an engaged campus, our plan will provide direction and guide us as we continue to proudly develop our brand as **Canada’s NCAA team**.

In this document, you will find our strategies for reinforcing our reputation, ensuring **student-athlete success**, encouraging **active living**, developing a positive **organizational culture** and creating **financial sustainability...**”³⁶

Many of the objectives and initiatives that are summarized in the strategic plan do not have associated metrics to evaluate progress. For example, under the heading “Champion the Student-Athlete Experience” the following objective and initiatives are provided.

“Objective 3

Plan for student-athletes to win in the classroom, in competition & in the community.

INITIATIVES

- Support and inspire academic success
- Elevate athletic performance
- Facilitate student-athlete well-being & personal development”

It is clear from reading this objective that the student-athlete experience is foundational and is a function of success in the classroom, in competition, and in the community. However, the strategic plan falls short in several ways; it does not answer ‘how’ certain initiatives are to be achieved, nor does it provide specific KPIs necessary to determine if objectives and initiatives have been achieved.

³⁶ SFU, “Unleashing Our Potential: A Strategic Plan for SFU Athletics & Recreation 2016-2021,” undated.

For example, “Elevate athletic performance” does not tell us ‘how’ athletic performance is to be elevated, or what KPIs are to be used to determine the degree to which this has been achieved. Winning in competition would seem to be an obvious KPI given the overriding objective is for student-athletes to “win.” Examples of other KPIs that could be used to measure “elevate athletic performance” include the achievement of statistical milestones and personal bests; thus, KPIs to measure performance could involve a combination of team and individual metrics. Similarly, there are no targets associated with winning in the classroom such as individual and team Grade Point Average (‘GPA’), and other measures of academic success and progression. These limitations are repeated for many of the eleven objectives in the strategic plan.

Another important limitation is the lack of information about the role of stakeholders in the strategic planning process. For example, were student-athletes consulted? What was the extent of consultation amongst full and part-time coaches, as well as consultation with the staff who collectively support the student-athlete experience? The entire strategic plan document is devoid of process, planning milestones, and has failed to achieve a number of stated objectives. For example, according to many staff, the Department did not “Produce an annual report highlighting accomplishments and completed projects from the strategic plan,”³⁷ an initiative provided under “Objective 8: Review & refine departmental policies & processes ensuring alignment with SFU’s governance model.”

These limitations are raised by the Special Advisor because many staff and coaches have expressed frustration and uncertainty about the strategic direction of the Department and how varsity sports are evaluated and supported, including football. For example, many staff expressed concerns about the competitiveness of the football team and a lack of accountability related to this metric. Some coaches expressed frustration about a lack of equity in how varsity teams are resourced and benchmarked.

³⁷ SFU, “Unleashing Our Potential: A Strategic Plan for SFU Athletics & Recreation 2016-2021,” undated.

There are many examples of best practices in athletics strategic planning that SFU can draw inspiration from in its next planning cycle including the Colorado Athletics 2022-23 strategic plan.³⁸ The Colorado Athletics plan provides a significant amount of detail involving Critical Performance Measures ('CPM') and processes to ensure accountabilities (absent in the SFU Department plan). For example, the Colorado plan identifies 16 "Process Owners," defined as "the individual responsible for following progress on achieving the identified target for each Critical Performance Measure (CPM), making certain that the appropriate resources are dedicated to the successful achievement of that target, and bringing resource requirements to the CU Athletics Lead Team when necessary."³⁹ Each of the assigned Process Owners ensures "that each individual CPM and its target must have a single, identifiable, Process Owner accountable for the success of that portion of the Strategic Plan."⁴⁰ This is an effective approach to ensure accountability in the implementation of the strategic plan.

"Canada's NCAA Team"

A discussion concerning SFU's membership in the NCAA DII is material to the assessment of return to play options for the football team and broader impacts on the University and the student-athlete community. There are significant impediments to finding a football-only solution that would require the Department to service and support student-athletes in two different governing bodies. These impediments are addressed in Chapter 4: 'Varsity Football Impacts.'

SFU prides itself on being "Canada's NCAA Team" which is a foundational component of the Department and University's current athletics brand and heritage. The Department's sponsorship brochure characterizes SFU's NCAA affiliation as follows:

³⁸ University of Colorado, "Colorado Athletics 2021-23 Strategic Plan." Online: https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/sidearm.nextgen.sites/cubuffs.com/documents/2021/1/21/2021_23_Strategic_Plan.pdf [Last Accessed: August 7 2023].

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

“SFU Athletics is Canada’s only NCAA member. Athletes from across Canada and the globe come to SFU for a world-class education and the chance to #RepTheLeaf while competing in the largest collegiate sports organization on the planet.”⁴¹

It was a strategic decision to join the NAIA upon SFU’s founding. Competing in the United States was a differentiator and was aligned with SFU’s genesis as a bold new university start-up in Canada. At the time, athletic scholarships were not offered in Canada and SFU wanted the ability to offer its student-athletes financial aid that supported their athletic pursuits as part of the broader student-athlete experience. However, present day there are many limitations of competing as the NCAA’s only international member, referred to in the Deloitte Benchmarking Report as “SFU’s most challenging factor.”⁴²

It is clear from the football program’s early beginnings that leaders including founding Athletic Director Lorne Davies and Chancellor Gordon Shrum, O.C., aspired to compete at the highest levels of collegiate sport in the United States. Shrum’s desire to have the SFU football team compete one day in the Rose Bowl is evidence of this aspiration.

Today, SFU competes in the NCAA Division II and the thought of the football team competing in the Rose Bowl would be considered fantasy by most today. Penn State, who won the 2023 Rose Bowl, reported \$170.5M (USD) in total athletic department expenses in 2020-21, including football expenses of almost \$60M.⁴³ Of course, football also is the economic engine that powers the athletic department including \$105M in revenues in the same fiscal year — made possible by the NCAA DI football juggernaut including multi-billion dollar television revenues. For example, The Big 10 Conference in which Penn State competes “is in the middle of a six-year, \$2.64 billion deal with Fox and ESPN that expires in 2023 and currently makes it the lead dog in annual TV revenue. The league gets about \$440 million a year in TV money (including from the Fox-run Big Ten Network), meaning

⁴¹ SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation, “2022-23 Simon Fraser University Athletics Sponsorship Tiers,” undated.

⁴² Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

⁴³ StateCollege.com, “Penn State Athletics: All-Time Highs Have Department Eyeing \$1 Billion in Football Revenue Since James Franklin Hire,” 2 February 2023.

each of the 14 schools receives about \$31.4 million.”⁴⁴ No such revenue streams are available to SFU.

Since SFU’s founding, the collegiate sporting landscape has changed significantly in the United States and Canada. Members of U SPORTS now offer athletic scholarships, known as Athletic Financial Awards (‘AFAs’), and many varsity teams recruit American players. The University of British Columbia (‘UBC’), for example, includes three American players on its football roster. Exhibitions between U SPORTS teams and NCAA DI opponents are commonplace in many sports (excluding football) which provides further evidence of the quality of competition offered in Canada. However, some student-athletes on SFU varsity teams believe that competing in the United States provides more exposure and professional sport opportunities in certain sports. For example, a member of the SFU men’s soccer team suggested that competing in the NCAA DII provides better access to the American sport system including the Major League Soccer (‘MLS’) draft. This is an important consideration and requires further consultation with all SFU varsity athletes to assess the perceived advantages and disadvantages of participating in the NCAA DII.

Many consider the corporatization of DI sports in the United States incongruous with a balanced student-athlete experience. However, in the NCAA DII, “schools aspire to a balanced approach in which student-athletes reach their highest potential in the sports they love to play, the academic goals they choose to pursue, the engagement with their campus and local communities, and the personal development and wellness they need to succeed in life after college.”⁴⁵ The NCAA DII’s balanced approach is a much better fit philosophically with SFU versus DI. However, SFU is disadvantaged in other ways as the NCAA’s only international member with many examples provided in this Report.

⁴⁴ On3 News, “Here’s a look at all the current conference TV deals,” 8 February 2021. Online: <https://www.on3.com/news/conference-tv-deals-current-status-college-football/> [Last Accessed: 15 August 2023].

⁴⁵ NCAA, “Our Division II Priorities.” Online: <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/4/20/our-division-ii-priorities.aspx> [Last Accessed: 15 August 2023].

The mission and values promoted by U SPORTS are quite similar to those of the NCAA DII. “Through governing, delivering, celebrating and advocating for national university sport, U SPORTS aims to support the provision of outstanding environments and opportunities for student-athletes to achieve their full academic and athletic potential.”⁴⁶ Guiding values of U SPORTS include Students First; Excellence; Equity; Competitive Balance; and Integrity and Transparency.

The competitive and philosophical congruity between U SPORTS and the NCAA DII begs the question as to what is the value proposition for SFU’s participation in the NCAA DII in 2023? This question was explored with many individuals but was very difficult for those in the SFU community to answer. The most common responses included references to SFU’s heritage and “returning to our roots” to explain why SFU chose to leave Canadian Interuniversity Sport for the NCAA DII in 2010. No one could offer any data-driven explanation or empirical support for SFU’s continued participation in the NCAA DII beyond anecdotes including the allure of competing in the United States. This allure is more commonly associated with NCAA DI programs and less so in the NCAA DII.

One might assume that SFU Athletics is perhaps a recruitment engine for American student-athletes but SFU officials “cannot say for certain if that translates to applicants.” There were a total of 50 U.S. citizens on SFU varsity teams in 2022, representing 13% of the student-athlete population. With football’s exit, this drops to a total of 29 U.S. citizens, or 10% of the total student-athlete population. SFU’s 2022 fall enrollment included a total of 5,133 international undergraduate students of which 81 (1.6%) were citizens of the United States⁴⁷. SFU’s international recruiting efforts are focused on markets in India, China, and other overseas markets more so than the United States as demonstrated by these enrollment statistics. Therefore, the impact of the Department’s membership in the NCAA DII on SFU’s international recruitment efforts is marginal at best.

⁴⁶ U SPORTS, “U SPORTS Strategic Plan 2019-2024.” Online: https://usports.ca/uploads/hq/By_Laws-Policies-Procedures/Strategic_Plan/2019-2024/USports_StrategicPlan19_digital_EN_Updated.pdf [Last Accessed: 15 August 2023].

⁴⁷ SFU Student Recruitment and Admissions, 18 August 2023. Note: The 81 citizens of the United States does not include dual citizens who are considered domestic students by SFU.

Several individuals at SFU have asked the same question about the value proposition of competing in the United States and believe the question must be answered through rigorous analysis and University-wide consultation. This would be a prudent undertaking given the significant budget deficits in the Department of Athletics and other challenges associated with competing in the United States that have been raised in this Report. Additionally, The Deloitte Benchmarking Report considered “SFU’s most challenging factor, its status as the only NCAA institution in Canada...”⁴⁸

Key Performance Indicators (‘KPIs’)

There is a lack of clarity on what, and how, Key Performance Indicators are used to systematically evaluate all varsity teams in the Department, including football. Most striking is the absence of KPIs to assess the student-athlete experience including no formalized mechanisms for student-athletes to provide feedback about their team, coaches, or other services. This is atypical of most high-performance university athletics programs in Canada. A process to elicit this feedback regularly from student-athletes is vital to identify potential issues and opportunities associated with their athletics experience. This information can also be used to benchmark programs and to identify trends across all varsity teams.

Engaging student-athletes in the evaluation process is a best practice that is commonplace amongst universities in Canada and there are several examples that SFU can draw inspiration from including the University of Guelph Department of Athletics and the UBC Department of Athletics. As the Department contemplates its next strategic planning process, it would be helpful to convene a small working group of student-athletes to provide input to a more systematic program/coach review process that incorporates the student-athlete voice.

Although the Department does collect various data including team records, academic progress, budget information, event attendance, and social media engagement, among others it is unclear how this information is used to ensure accountability or inform strategic decisions. For example,

⁴⁸ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

how and when are KPIs used to identify program shortcomings and how is this information used to course correct when issues are identified? KPIs can and should be used to evaluate the relative positioning, success, and sustainability of all current varsity sport offerings, and not just football. The lack of rigor in identifying KPIs in the Department’s last strategic plan suggests the need for a more systematic approach to gathering and assessing performance indicators.

The table below provides several suggested KPIs that can be used by the Department to assess its varsity sports on an equal footing. The relative weighting of these KPIs and the associated accountabilities must be determined by the Department through consultation with Department staff, coaches, student-athletes, and others. This will develop a common understanding and buy-in as it relates to the expectations and accountabilities associated with every varsity program at SFU.

Suggested KPIs for Varsity Program Assessment

KPI	Related Department Strategic Mandate	Comments about Measuring this KPI
1. Student-Athlete Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student-Athlete Success - Reputation - Organizational Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires annual or bi-annual consultation with student-athletes, ideally through an anonymous survey mechanism. Many best practices are available from Canadian universities; - The relative satisfaction associated with a student-athlete’s experience can be measured and compared across teams; - Provides an opportunity for the Department to identify and share best practices across teams as well as intervene and course correct when necessary.
2. Academic Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student-Athlete Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic average of the team; - Student-athletes on the Honour Roll; - Student-athletes on academic probation; - Student-athlete retention (year-over-year); - Student-athlete graduate rates; - Student-athlete awards and distinctions.
3. Win-Loss Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student-Athlete Success - Reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measure of competitiveness; - Yearly and long-term high-performance plans that define what it means to be competitive by program;

		- Evaluate the impact of program competitiveness on the student-athlete experience.
4. Program Cost and Financial KPIs - Operating cost per student-athlete; - Total operating cost; - Budget discipline; - Cost of support services by program.	- Financial Sustainability - Student-Athlete Success	- Total operating cost per student-athlete allows a comparison of program resource equity by team; - For example, the total operating cost per football student-athlete was \$9,289 in 2022-23 ⁴⁹ . This should be benchmarked against all other SFU varsity teams; - Budget discipline involves an assessment of meeting established budget targets; - Several costs are centralized in the Department and are not reflected in a program's actual cost. For example, staffing costs associated with support services (tutoring, athletic therapy, compliance and eligibility, development/fundraising, etc.); - Larger programs draw on more centralized Department resources which should be reflected in each team's budget to fully understand the total cost of each program.
5. Scholarship Support	- Student-Athlete Success - Financial Sustainability	- Scholarship equivalencies by team; - Average and maximum scholarship by team.
6. Fundraising	- Student-Athlete Success - Financial Sustainability	- Fundraising targets by team; - Event-based fundraising (e.g. golf tournaments, banquets, etc.); - Donations by individuals and organizations; - Percentage of budget supported through fundraising; - Note: The cost of fundraising should be included in fundraising KPIs, including associated staff salaries and expenses.
7. Alumni Engagement	- Reputation - Student-Athlete Success - Financial Sustainability	- Measures of alumni engagement including financial and other forms of program support; - Number and percentage of alumni who donate to a program;

⁴⁹ Note: Calculated using Total 2022-23 Net Expense of \$901,072 divided by 97 student-athletes on the football roster.

		- Annual and pro-forma alumni giving projections.
8. Recruiting	- Student-Athlete Success - Reputation	- Measures related to recruiting success; - Quality of recruiting class; - Annual assessment of cost of recruiting including cost per student-athlete recruited (this provides a measure of efficiency in the recruiting process).
9. Coach Retention and Continuity	- Student-Athlete Success - Organizational Culture - Reputation	- Coaching turnover and lack of continuity in retaining coaches is a negative symptom associated with football and can be a KPI measured across all varsity teams; - The issue associated with football suggests a need to review hiring processes and coaching support strategies. For example, onboarding programs, clear expectations and accountabilities set for the coach and program, adequate program support, salary benchmarking, etc.
10. Risk Management	- Student-Athlete Success - Reputation - Organizational Culture - Financial Sustainability	- Measures associated with risk management can be developed including both injury statistics and other forms of risk including financial risks, facility risks, and reputational risks.
11. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	- Student-Athlete Success - Organizational Culture - Reputation	- The degree to which teams are aligned with the EDI goals of the University can and should be measured.
12. Community Engagement	- Student-Athlete Success - Reputation - Active Living - Organizational Culture - Financial Sustainability	- Several measures of community engagement can be developed including engagement of the SFU campus community as well as the broader Burnaby and Vancouver area; - For example, event attendance figures, SFU student support, SFU faculty/staff support, community outreach initiatives by the team (players, coaches), and volunteer initiatives, among others.
13. Media Exposure and Brand Value	- Reputation	- The amount of media exposure generated by a team can be tracked including streaming media views, social media impressions, unique website views; - Collectively, this media exposure can have a positive or negative effect on the SFU brand.

These KPIs can be developed and used in a variety of ways. Most people interviewed by the Special Advisor do not understand how varsity sports are evaluated including how they are linked to the priorities of the institution. For example, a priority might be placed on KPIs related to fielding a competitive program (as defined for each team) as this tends to be associated with the quality of the student-athlete experience as well as other branding benefits to the University. Although wins and losses are indicative of competitiveness, they are affected by KPIs including operating budgets, scholarship support, recruiting success, continuity in coaching, and many others. As such, the relative importance, impact, and accountabilities associated with these KPIs must be determined by the Department and linked to the Department’s strategic mandate and values. For example, what are the KPIs that are foundational to measuring Reputation, Student-Athlete Success, Active Living, Organizational Culture, and Financial Sustainability — the five pillars of the Department’s strategic mandate?⁵⁰

The Department also has produced the following table that summarises Key Performance Goals:

Key Performance Goals

Academic Performance	Athletic Performance	Administrative/ Fiscal	Professional/Personal Conduct	External Relations
Team GPA, including improvement from previous year	Informed of current coaching trends, techniques and strategies	Fiscal Responsibility; management of budget	Ethical conduct (understanding of compliance with NCAA, SFU rules and regulations)	Establishes positive working relationships with in the university setting among faculty, staff and students
Student-Athlete GPA	Technical knowledge and skills	Proper administration of resources	Approachability / Supportive	Relationship / good rapport with former players
Interest in academic well-being of student-athletes	Team performance (conference, post season, overall)	Adheres to university / department policies and procedures	Professional conduct, role model for student-athletes	Works closely with sports info, advancement and marketing to help promote sport
Supporting community service initiatives	Individual performances	Fundraising initiative and success	Personal conduct (enthusiasm, moral conduct, attitude, attire)	Cultivates positive relationships with alumni, community and high schools / community coaches
Eligibility of team members	Citizenship qualities and conduct of student-athletes	Organizational management	Displays a positive and professional approach	Support of and attendance at department projects and functions
	Quality of recruits	Maintenance, care and concern for equipment	Concern for health and safety treatment and general welfare of student-athletes	
	Retention of team members	Works well with staff / personnel		
	Motivates athlete performance	Quality and supervision of assistant coaches		

According to the staff member who provided this table, “No values were placed on anything, just headings. I am unsure how any of it was measured.” It would be helpful for the Department to link

⁵⁰ Simon Fraser University Department of Athletics and Recreation, “2022 Athletics and Recreation Review,” 14 February 2022.

the Key Performance Goals with the Strategic Mandate. Some of the goals listed in this table identify KPIs such as Student-Athlete GPA as a measure of Academic Performance. However, other measures are vague such as the “quality of recruits” used as an indicator of “Athletic Performance.” A more precise measure of the quality of recruits, for example, could include scouting ratings; in the sport of football, an organization called Canada Football Chat (‘CFC’) produces a rating of the Top 100 prospects. This specific measure is used amongst U SPORTS football programs to identify and benchmark the respective quality of recruits across programs.

2.5 Finances and Capacity

Significant issues were raised by staff members in the Department about resources and capacity to deliver its current varsity programming. A 2022 Athletics and Recreation Review (“2022 Review”) validates these concerns wherein it is noted that “A&R is currently facing an annual deficit as high as \$1.1 million in future years...”⁵¹ The Department projected an even higher structural deficit of \$1.77M for 2023-24; however, the Department was mandated to reduce the budget by \$700,000 which included cuts to several staff positions funded by the Department and other cuts including travel and meals.⁵² A senior staff member suggested the Department “cannot make strategic decisions at this time; we are handcuffed by the budget.”

This structural budget deficit has been left unchecked for several years including a pre-covid deficit of \$749,784 in 2018-19 and \$1,017,083 in 2019-20.⁵³ These deficits have largely been managed through a series of annual transfers from the Associate Vice-President Students⁵⁴; however, these transfers are not sustainable and the Department cannot rely on the certainty of further University transfers to offset budget shortfalls.

⁵¹ Simon Fraser University Department of Athletics and Recreation, “2022 Athletics and Recreation Review,” 14 February 2022.

⁵² SFU, “Staff Interview with the Special Advisor,” 3 August 2023.

⁵³ Note: These 2018-19 and 2019-20 deficit amounts exclude one-time AVPS/SFU transfers.

⁵⁴ Note: The current Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Students assumed oversight of the Department of Athletics and Recreation in 2020.

Without additional funding from University sources, the means to address future structural deficits portends further cuts if increases in self-generated funding do not materialize. According to the 2022 Review, salary and benefit costs comprise approximately 55% of the budget with non-payroll expenses totalling 35% with the remaining 10% allocated towards an annual \$1M gym loan payment. A further explanation of these expenses is provided as follows:

“The primary drivers of non-payroll costs are travel expenses, which remain high and hard to predict due to market inflation and CAD-US exchange rates, with equipment and supplies also inflating costs with on-time upgrades and initiatives. Athletic programs show the biggest cost in the budget with an allocation of \$3.8M of base funding in FY19-20 with \$5.7 million in total expenses.”⁵⁵

In addition to the internal 2022 Review completed by the Department, a Benchmark and Scan Report (‘Benchmarking Report’) was completed in 2022 by the management consulting firm Deloitte. The Benchmarking Report relied on an NCAA Comparator Group of eight institutions selected by SFU utilizing data from the NCAA Institutional Performance Program (‘IPP’) database. The Benchmarking Report also included a comparison of five peer institutions utilizing financial reports and interviews. A strong theme that emerged from these interviews includes concerns about athletic expenses and athletic financial aid, illustrated as follows:

“A consistent and resonating theme heard throughout our interviews is the influx of several cost unknowns following the pandemic. Rising travel costs, pandemic-related expenses related to testing and contests, and the NCAA’s recent push to ensure that the student-athlete experience is paramount have highlighted a **strong sense of urgency in financial viability** (emphasis added).”⁵⁶

The IPP data reports sourced by Deloitte were organized into three distinct groupings for comparison with SFU; these include (1) NCAA Division II; (2) GNAC; and (3) Self-selected Peer Group. SFU’s athletics revenues against its NCAA Comparator Groups illustrate the following five key themes:

⁵⁵ Simon Fraser University Department of Athletics and Recreation, “2022 Athletics and Recreation Review,” 14 February 2022.

⁵⁶ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

1. **“Operating Revenue Disparity** – SFU’s Total Operating Revenue is lower than its Peer Group (15% less revenue on average each year between 2016-2020). However, SFU’s Operating Revenues are higher than the GNAC and NCAA Division II (6% and 15% higher, respectively).”

2. **“Sports Camp Revenue Decline** – Sports Camp Revenue has seen a dramatic 71% decline from 2016 to 2020. From 2016-2019 (pre-pandemic) SFU reported an 85% loss in camp revenue. The Peer Group and NCAA Division II reported consistent/steady revenues from the 2016-19 timeframe.”

3. **“Direct Institutional Support is High** – Support from the university at SFU is the highest in comparison to NCAA Division II (28%) GNAC (33%) and its Peer Group (23%) on average each year from 2016-2020. However, this is likely the result of SFU reporting, which includes student fees here⁵⁷ – rather than on a separate line item as with other peers studied.”

4. **“Low Self-Generated Revenue** – SFU has significantly less self-generated revenue than the NCAA Comparator Groups. SFU’s Self-Generated Revenue is almost half of each NCAA Comparator Group each year (2016-2021). This likely is due to an absence of Student-Fees revenue noted in SFU’s IPP report.”

5. **“Large Endowment Revenue** – SFU’s Endowment and Investment Income is approximately 13 times larger than that of their Peer Group on average per year. Notably, the other group’s Endowment and investment Income have also increased since 2016, but the amount is significantly less than SFU’s.”⁵⁸

SFU’s athletics expenses against its NCAA Comparator Groups illustrate the following six themes:

1. **“Marginally Higher Total Operating Expenses** – SFU has higher Total Operating Expenses than all of its NCAA Comparator Groups at approximately 11% more expenses on average each year (2016-2021).”

2. **“Expensive Team Travel** – SFU spends approximately 22% more than its Peer Group on Team Travel Expenses on average from 2016 to 2020 (the Peer Group has a larger Team Travel Expense than both the GNAC and NCAA Division II). Team Travel expenses have also increased by approximately 28% from 2016 to 2020 for SFU.”

3. **“Fluctuating Fundraising Expenses** – SFU reported a large Fundraising, Marketing, and Promotion expense in 2019 that was approximately 3.3 times higher than its previous year.”

⁵⁷ Note: SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation estimates that approximately 67%-70% of base funding is from student fees, thus the Direct Institutional Support comparison is flawed.

⁵⁸ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

4. **“Lower Coaching Compensation** – SFU reports slightly higher overall Coaching Compensation when compared to NCAA Division II (5%) however, presents lower compensation than its Peer Group (40%) and the GNAC (10%). This is telling as SFU is located in an area with a higher living cost than most of the institutions in the NCAA Comparator Groups.”

5. **“High Recruiting Expenses** – SFU’s Recruiting Expenses are approximately 25% more than the GNAC and NCAA Division II from 2016 to 2020. SFU has also seen approximately a 10% increase each year on average in its recruiting expenses from 2016 to 2020.”

6. **“Higher Sports Offering Portfolio** – SFU offers more sports than its Peer Group. It offers approximately 1 sport more on average. SFU also has more student-athletes receiving financial aid than any other institution.”⁵⁹

Furthermore, Deloitte provided the following emerging themes related to SFU’s financial aid against its NCAA Comparator Groups:

1. **“Low Athletic Aid per Student-Athlete** – SFU has lower Athletic Aid per Student-Athlete in comparison to the NCAA Comparator Groups. Specifically, SFU is reporting 110% less on average each year (2016-2020) than its NCAA Comparator Groups.”

2. **“Low Athletics Grant-in-Aid** – SFU also experiences low Athletics Grant-in-Aid in comparison to its NCAA Comparator Group. The University spends approximately half (98%) of than its Peer Group each year (2016-2020).

3. **“More Students and Fewer Equivalencies** – SFU has approximately 10% more student-athletes each year and approximately 18% fewer Equivalencies each year than its Peer Group, making its Athletic Aid per Student-Athlete number lower than its Peer Group.”

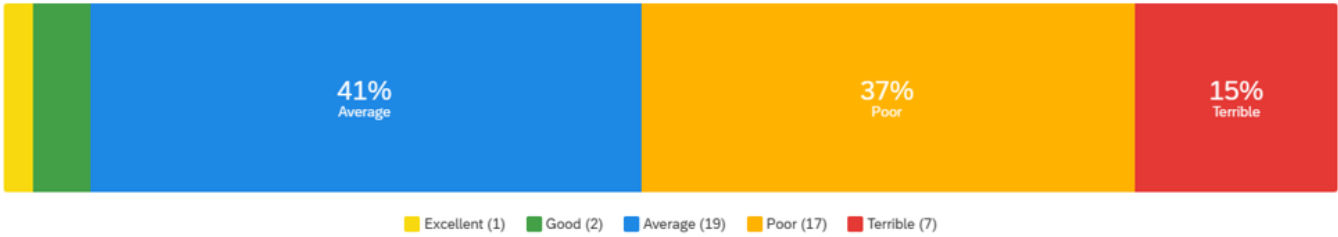
4. **“Equivalency funding** – In 2021, SFU provided approximately 55% equivalency for men’s sports and approximately 42% equivalency for women’s sports.”⁶⁰

The Deloitte findings are important and are consistent with feedback received from a staff survey that was implemented. Staff were asked to describe the capacity of the Department to deliver its varsity sports programs before the termination of the football program on 4 April 2023. The figure below illustrates this feedback.

⁵⁹ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

⁶⁰ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

Department of Athletics and Recreation Capacity Described by Staff



More than half of the staff (52%, n=34) described the capacity of the Department as “Poor” or “Terrible” compared with three individuals (6.5%, n=3) who described the capacity as “Good” or “Excellent.” Staff responses are organized into theme areas and provided in Appendix C: ‘Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff Survey Results.’ Negative themes related to capacity include insufficient funding, overworked support staff, and physical infrastructure needs. Some staff acknowledged progress in that “we have the (staff) infrastructure now in place that was not there before” including an Associate Director of Athletics, a Facility Manager, and a Director of Operations — all described as “positions that were sorely needed and can help us be successful.”

Chapter 3: SFU Football and League Options

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of SFU varsity football from its NAIA beginnings in 1965 to the present day informed by perspectives of alumni and coaches who represented the program in the NAIA, Canadian Interuniversity Sport (known today as U SPORTS), and the NCAA. An analysis of the program's operating structure and finances is provided within the broader framework of the Department and University along with feedback on what is required to field a team that is both sustainable and competitive. An analysis of the operating structure and finances as it relates to the viability of resuming a varsity football program is discussed including league options in the United States and Canada.

3.2 Historical Evolution of SFU Football

Varsity football was a flagship program of the nascent University established in 1965. The bold decision to participate in the United States through membership in the NAIA reflected the University's differentiated approach; from its location 365 meters atop Burnaby Mountain to its campus architecture, SFU chose to be unconventional and the athletics program was no different.

Founding Director of Athletics Lorne Davies together with Gordon Shrum, the University's first Chancellor, were strong proponents of establishing a football program in the United States. The 'Shrum Bowl' — a cross-town rivalry football game between UBC and SFU — was named in his honour.

The decision to participate in the United States reflected the unique DNA of Simon Fraser University. SFU aspired to be different and exceptional and the football program supported that brand. The value proposition for football was to attract both Canadian and American players through the lure of the start-up University together with offering athletic scholarships — unavailable as an option in Canada at the time. Moreover, SFU's athletics leadership believed that the level of competition was

stronger in the United States versus Canadian university football, including the ability to attract talented players through athletic scholarships. The NAIA was the only option to compete in the United States as the membership rules of the NCAA in 1965 precluded international membership.

The football program helped to create awareness for the University and offered a unique alternative for student-athletes. In addition to being different, geography also played a role in the decision to participate in the United States given Burnaby's proximity to the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Competing against programs in nearby Washington and Oregon "worked" according to several alumni familiar with the founding of the program.

SFU participated as a member of the NAIA for 36 years, from 1965 to 2001; however, the football program was not always on solid footing during this period. In January 1982 SFU President George Pedersen recommended "a sweeping package of budget cuts and fee hikes aimed at eliminating Simon Fraser University's projected recurring budget deficit of \$1.5M."⁶¹ Interestingly, the 2023 projected deficit of the Department prior to football's elimination exceeded the University's entire budget deficit in 1982. An official SFU news release stated that the cuts "include termination of 25 employee positions, elimination of the Reading and Study Centre and **an end to both the football and track programs** (emphasis added)."⁶² The anticipated savings were \$152,800 from the elimination of football and track.⁶³ According to a member of the SFU Senate at the time, the SFU Board of Governors approved the cutting of the football and track and field programs.

Between 1965 and 1982, the Department of Athletics and Recreation was fully funded by SFU, and the aforementioned budget cuts "were fashioned to 'minimize the negative impact' on the University's primary functions of teaching and research."⁶⁴ However, the football and track teams did not end up being cut thanks to the intervention of student leaders and others who proposed the introduction of the University's first-ever Recreation-Athletics Fee ('RAF'). In April 1982 the SFU

⁶¹ SFU, "News Release," 19 January 1982.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ SFU, "Fact sheet on proposed budget measures to reduce SFU's projected \$1.5 million deficit," 19 January 1982.

⁶⁴ SFU, "News Release," 19 January 1982.

Board of Governors approved the implementation of the RAF which saved both the football and track programs. In September 1982 the RAF was levied in the amount of \$6.00 per student.

The potential loss of these varsity programs led to the development of a Statement of Principles for athletics and recreation to educate the SFU community about the value of athletics and recreation and to bolster support for the Department's mandate. The following recommendation was made to the Board of Governors:

D R A F T

June 10, 1983

TO: Board of Governors

FROM: George Suart, Vice-President, Administration

RECOMMENDATION:

That the following Statement of Principles for athletics and recreation programming at SFU be approved:

1. Athletics and recreation programs and services are an integral part of the university community.
2. The athletics and recreational programs should be conducted in conformity with the overall educational aims of the university.
3. Athletics and recreation programs and services are designed to serve -
 - a) the highly skilled and motivated athlete, and
 - b) any member of the university community who wishes to participate in competitive, non-competitive, individual and/or team recreational activities.
4. An open policy of giving scholarships and financial awards to deserving student-athletes in recognition of their athletic and academic ability is inherent in SFU's athletics and recreation programs.
5. Athletics and recreation programs at SFU should act as catalysts for developing an esprit de corps within the university community, the university's alumni and the public at large.

CS/rb

This recommendation was “passed on 2 August 1983 based on the original memo from the President to the BOG dated July 6, 1983.”⁶⁵ In September 1984 the SFU Athletics and Recreation Committee “made a Supplementary Funding Proposal — in response to further University budget reductions to increase the Athletic-Recreation Fee from \$6.00 to \$9.00 to cover all projected Athletic program shortfalls and leave the athletics program intact. Approved and ratified by the SFU BOG.”⁶⁶ Student contributions through this fee today represent approximately 70% of the Department’s funding and the fee has grown from \$6.00 in 1982 to \$84.94 per term in 2023.

In 2002, SFU football joined Canadian Interuniversity Sport (‘CIS’) following the dissolution of football in the NAIA conference in which SFU was participating. According to one SFU alumnus, “This left SFU with no place to play.” The NCAA was not an option for SFU to consider at the time because of its membership policies restricting international participation. As a result, the football program and other SFU teams were granted membership in CIS.

SFU participated as a member of CIS for eight years, from 2002 to 2009, and compiled a record of 16 wins, 47 losses, and 2 ties for a winning percentage of 25%. During that time, the football team qualified for the playoffs twice and won the Canada West Conference Championship in 2003. However, a change to the NCAA’s membership rules that permitted applications from international colleges and universities led SFU to leave Canada for membership in the NCAA DII in 2010. This decision was taken as an affront to many affiliated with CIS who had welcomed SFU with open arms when they were faced with no place to play in 2002. The rationale for leaving Canada for the NCAA was “to return to our roots” according to one football alumnus and confirmed by many others associated with the football program and the Department. It was a decision that appeared to be motivated primarily by philosophical rather than operational considerations. Several individuals believe that the decision to leave CIS after the 2009 season was misguided including one athletics alumnus who commented that “The University approached it with naivety and did not fully realize what they were getting themselves into.” Today, SFU remains the only international member of the NCAA.

⁶⁵ Email correspondence to the Special Advisor, 25 July 2023.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

SFU and its football program were granted membership in the Great Northwest Athletics Conference ('GNAC') of the NCAA DII. After competing for more than a decade in the GNAC, the conference eliminated football after the 2021 season because of membership attrition. SFU football, along with other remaining GNAC football schools were forced to find other options to continue their programs; they found a solution in the Texas-based Lone Star Conference ('LSC'), announced as follows:

“Central Washington, Simon Fraser, and Western Oregon have accepted invitations to join the Lone Star Conference as affiliate members in football beginning with the 2022 season. The addition of the GNAC’s programs will make the Lone Star a 10-team conference in football.”⁶⁷

SFU and the LSC entered into a two-year affiliate membership agreement. Like the decision to join CIS in 2002, SFU’s move to the LSC was born out of necessity rather than being a strategic calculation; it was reactive. Moreover, according to some SFU staff, the implications of football joining the LSC were not fully considered including impacts on the football program and the Department which was experiencing a growing budget deficit at the time. Several staff interviewed by the Special Advisor suggested that the decision to join the LSC was ill-advised and has further contributed to the growing deficit within the Department.

In their inaugural season in the LSC, SFU football finished in last place amongst the 10-team conference with a 1-9 record. SFU ranked last in almost every offensive and defensive statistical category. The team’s overall record in the NCAA from 2010-2022 is 18 wins and 99 losses, a winning percentage of 15%. On 23 January 2023, SFU was informed by the LSC that it would not renew its affiliate agreement with SFU following the 2023 season.

⁶⁷ Great Northwest Athletics Conference, “Football Programs Accept Lone Star Affiliate Membership,” 18 November, 2021. Online: [GNACSports.com - Football Programs Accept Lone Star Affiliate Membership](https://gnacsports.com/news/football-programs-accept-lone-star-affiliate-membership) [Last Accessed: 21 July 2023].

3.3 Football Budget Analysis

Current Budget

A summary of the main expense categories is provided for both 2022-23 (Actuals) and 2023-24⁶⁸. The 2023-24 budget reflects the projected budget before the termination of the football program.

SFU Football 2022-23 Budget Summary – Expenses

Salary and Benefits:	\$382,284.00
General Expenses (Equipment, Officials, Recruiting, etc.):	\$238,800.00
Travel:	\$435,523.00
Meals:	\$190.00
Total:	\$1,056,797.00
Fundraising Transfer	(\$155,725.00)
NET:	\$901,072.00

SFU Football 2023-24 Budget Summary – Pro Forma Expenses

Salary and Benefits:	\$447,123.00
General Expenses (Equipment, Officials, Recruiting, etc.):	\$125,860.00
Travel:	\$399,076.00
Meals:	\$5,000.00
Total:	\$977,059.00

This illustrates a year-over-year budget reduction of \$79,738 (7.5%) between 2022-23 actuals and the projected budget for 2023-24. However, the 2022-23 budget actuals include an internal fundraising transfer of \$155,725 thus showing a net expense of \$901,072. Each varsity team in the Department has its own fundraising account and can draw upon it to augment the base budget provided by the University.

In 2022-23, travel accounted for 48% of the total budget, with salaries accounting for 36% of the total. Projected salary expenses increased by \$64,839 (17%) between 2022-23 and 2023-24. The

⁶⁸ SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation, "SFU Football Actuals from 2018-19 to 2022-23," undated.

Department of Athletics and Recreation is responsible for funding increases to salaries and benefits which represents a growing cost across all programs in the Department. There is a significant variance in equipment expenses from year to year which amounted to \$130,770 in 2022-23 and \$36,100 in 2023-24; this accounts for much of the variation between these two fiscal years. It is typical for equipment expenses to vary like this from year to year depending on the equipment renewal cycle in the sport of football.

There are many ways that athletic team budgets across all sports can be analyzed beyond total operating costs. For example, one measure is the operating cost per student-athlete. In 2022, a total of 97 players were listed on the SFU football roster⁶⁹; therefore, the cost per student-athlete to operate the football program amounted to \$9,289⁷⁰. This is a helpful KPI to analyze and compare the total investment per student-athlete across different programs. This is also a helpful tool to equitably compare program investments given the large differences in roster sizes between football and other sports. This analysis can be done on a more granular basis to systematically compare specific areas of expense across programs including cost per student-athlete in coaching, equipment, travel, etc. Many staff and coaches raised concerns about the inequity between varsity teams in the Department; therefore, such analysis is helpful to benchmark program resource equity across different budget categories.

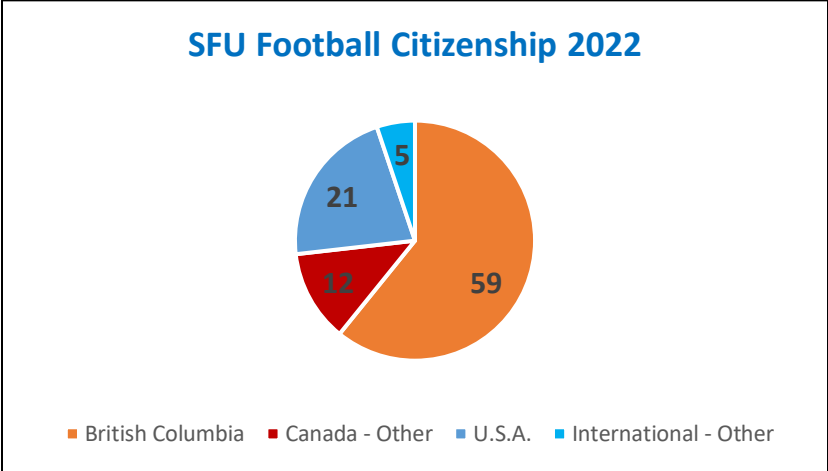
The operating costs in the football budget — and for other varsity teams — do not represent the total cost of program delivery. For example, varsity team operating costs do not factor in the percentage of other centralized Department staffing costs attributable to each varsity team such as athletic therapy, compliance, communications, marketing, fundraising, and the percentage of time spent by administrators in the Department on each of the varsity sports. These are simply grouped into Departmental operating costs and are not notionally allocated to team budgets. For example, it is estimated that the Associate Director of Athletics spends approximately 60% of her time on

⁶⁹ SFU, “2022 Football Roster,” undated. Online: <https://athletics.sfu.ca/sports/football/roster> [Last Accessed: 28 July 2023].

⁷⁰ Note: Calculated using Total 2022-23 Net Expense of \$901,072 divided by 97 student-athletes on the football roster.

football servicing and support. These calculations are important KPIs to better understand the full cost of program delivery for all teams.

Another useful metric to consider is tuition and other revenues (e.g. housing) generated by SFU through student-athletes who are recruited to the University. The geographic breakdown of players on the football team is illustrated as follows:



More than 60% of the 2022 SFU football roster is from British Columbia. In total, 71 players are from Canada which represents 73% of the roster. The remaining 27% of the roster is international, including 21 players from the U.S. and 5 international players representing the Congo, Japan, and Australia.

SFU Tuition Revenue – Football 2022

Citizenship	# of Football Student-Athletes Enrolled	Average SFU Tuition	Total Tuition Income
Canadian	71	\$6,424 ⁷¹	\$456,104
International	26	\$33,046 ⁷²	\$859,196
Total			\$1,315,300

⁷¹ SFU, “Estimated Costs for Domestic Students,” Online: [Domestic students - Financial Aid and Awards - Simon Fraser University \(sfu.ca\)](https://www.sfu.ca/financialaid/financialaidandawards/domesticstudents) [Last Accessed: 17 August 2023].

⁷² SFU, “Estimated Costs for International Students,” Online: [International students - Financial Aid and Awards - Simon Fraser University \(sfu.ca\)](https://www.sfu.ca/financialaid/financialaidandawards/internationalstudents) [Last Accessed: 17 August 2023].



Historical Budget and 2017 Football Briefing Note

The Special Advisor reviewed SFU football budgets over the last five years and was provided with a 2017 Briefing Note that states “A winless and unsuccessful football program over the past 5 years, coupled with an inexperienced coaching staff has raised both immediate and long-term concerns and questions regarding the future of the SFU football program.”⁷³

The issues associated with football are summarized in the Briefing Note as follows:

“We are at a crossroads with football. In the last 5 years, we have had little consistency and even less continuity in the program as well as ineffective leadership — 3 head coaches, over 40 assistant and/or part-time coaches, a dismal winning percentage of 10%, and a not-so-positive student-athlete experience which has led to a student-athlete retention rate of 68%. Over 30% of football student-athletes have either quit or have been cut from the team over the past two years and have subsequently left SFU.

In its current state, SFU football is negatively impacting the reputation of the university. The time has come for a call to action: either make some bold changes or continue to find this level of failure acceptable. If we give it the right tools to succeed and invest in the future — specifically in the areas of coaching and scholarships —the potential to turn it around and restore both success and reputation is very achievable.”⁷⁴

This excerpt and its call to action explored two options: 1) Status Quo, or 2) Strategic Enhancement to the Football Program. Nowhere in the document does it raise the possibility of dropping football. On the contrary, the recommendation provided was “Option 2 to enhance the football program” supported by the following rationale:

“It’s the right thing to do. Making an investment into a sport that requires more institutional and alumni support will make a statement that the University cares about football and its (athletic) reputation. Our student-athletes deserve better. It will provide goodwill and assist us to work in good faith with the alumni as we develop our fundraising strategy for football, and Athletics in general.”

⁷³ SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation, “Briefing Note SFU Football,” November 2017.

⁷⁴ SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation, “Briefing Note SFU Football,” November 2017.

However, despite these investments, “the potential to turn it around and restore both success and reputation” was not achieved in the subsequent five years.

SFU Football Budget Actuals from 2018-19 to 2022-23 show a total increase of \$223,065, which represents a gain of 27%. These figures are illustrated in the following chart:

SFU Football Budget Actuals from 2018-19 to 2022-23

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Salaries and Benefits	400,427	416,720	275,005	374,427	382,284
Non-Payroll Expenses	433,304	411,816	77,856	560,599	674,512
Total Expenses	833,731	828,536	352,861	935,026	1,056,796 ⁷⁵

* Covid budget anomaly

The majority of budget increases are seen in Non-Payroll Expenses which increased by \$241,208 between 2018 and 2023 which represents a gain of 56%. However, salaries and benefits declined by \$18,143 or 4.5% over the same period.

The 2017 Briefing Note indicates total scholarship disbursements to football of \$294,598 in 2016-17 including \$200,000 in base funding from SFU. Total athletic scholarship disbursements to football in 2022 were \$438,250, representing an increase of 49% between 2016 and 2022. SFU-based funding of scholarships increased by 33% over this period to \$300,000.

The Briefing Note states to “Review progress at 3 years,” however the Special Advisor is not aware of such a review being conducted; nor were any specific and measurable goals provided in the Briefing Note other than alumni funds which targeted \$100,000 in annual fundraising in year five (2022-23). Goals were not established for wins-losses, team GPA performance, staffing continuity, or other measures to evaluate progress. This does not come as a surprise given the strategic planning limitations discussed in Chapter 2.4: ‘Strategic Planning and Key Performance Indicators.’

⁷⁵ SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation, “SFU Football Actuals from 2018-19 to 2022-23,” undated.

3.4 League Options: United States

3.4.1 Competitive Limitations

The SFU football team has struggled to field a competitive program in the United States. The lack of competitive success has been compounded by movement between the NAIA, CIS, and the NCAA with another potential move to contemplate arising from the Lone Star Conference's ('LSC') decision to terminate their affiliation with SFU football. The process of moving between conferences has proven to be disruptive for the football program as well as the Department and SFU more broadly; this is one factor that has negatively impacted the team's success. For example, an alumnus who was affiliated with the SFU football team when SFU chose to move from CIS to the NCAA in 2010 described "getting totally destroyed" in their inaugural year in the NCAA. "We had to start from almost nothing. Only seven seniors remained for the 2010 inaugural season in the NCAA and only two were good enough to play." According to another football alumnus, the current situation is "history repeating itself" and it will take several years for the program to become competitive and sustainable if and when it returns. This is a valid observation and reflects the departure of many SFU football players, leaving a depleted and mostly inexperienced group of student-athletes who have continued their enrollment at SFU despite the uncertainty of football's return.

One of the criticisms of participating in the U.S. football ecosystem including the NAIA and NCAA is the frequent upheaval of football conferences including the movement of teams in and out of conferences for various reasons as described herein. This is illustrated by the dissolution of SFU's NAIA football conference that necessitated a move to CIS in 2002, as well as changes in the GNAC and LSC that left SFU football the odd man out. The latter situation also demonstrates how SFU is disadvantaged as the only international member of the NCAA who is not on an equal playing field with their U.S. opponents. The fact that the LSC ended its affiliation with SFU and not the other two GNAC schools that were granted entry into the LSC at the same time as SFU illustrates this reality.

The Deloitte Benchmarking Report provides further evidence of the competitive disadvantages of SFU's participation in the NCAA. The Benchmarking Report highlights resource inequities including

those associated with the football program. These inequities have been used as a clarion call by SFU football alumni and others for more support of football over the years. These calls have not gone unheeded by SFU including a commitment to increase funding to the football program following a review in 2017 as discussed herein. However, despite investments that have been made since the 2017 review of football, the program has done little to close the gap with better-funded American programs where football is more culturally entrenched than in Canada.

Many SFU football alumni and former coaches with first-hand experience competing in the United States do not believe that SFU football can succeed in the United States. One former head coach stated there are “many true limitations of competing in the United States” and another coach added, “There is never going to be a future here for football in the United States.” These limitations go beyond resource inequities as illustrated in the Benchmarking Report. As the lone international school in the NCAA, SFU is disadvantaged in its ability to recruit top U.S. student-athletes to the football program.

SFU football offers less than half of the scholarship equivalencies permitted by the NCAA DII, which is further compounded by international tuition fees and a high cost of living in the greater Vancouver area. “SFU is deficient in scholarship support which impacts recruiting” according to a former coach. The cost of living and coaching wages also were cited by several individuals as a limiting factor in the recruitment and retention of coaches from the U.S. which has been identified as a problematic issue for the program.

Another coach explained that “Many DII schools who do not have hard cash for scholarships use tuition waivers and SFU does not operate that way.” This provides another example of inequities in the recruiting processes between SFU and their U.S. counterparts. Another “flaw in the system” reported by a former coach is that “Kids in Jr. College have SAT⁷⁶ results applied after grade 11 and are getting scholarship offers in their Junior (3rd) year. In Canada and at SFU, kids must write SATs but have to wait for their final grade 12 grades.” These inequities make it difficult for SFU to attract

⁷⁶ Note: The ‘SAT’ originally stood for “Scholastic Aptitude Test” and went through several other name changes and is now known today simply as the three letter acronym SAT.

top U.S. student-athletes, notwithstanding other “hoops to jump through as an international destination” as expressed by an alumnus. An example of the inequities in the recruiting process involved a prized recruit from nearby Vancouver, Washington. This was a 4.0 Grade Point Average academically gifted student-athlete who had been accepted by multiple institutions including Stanford, Notre Dame, and Holy Cross, among others. However, the one-year delay in receiving an acceptance decision from SFU was one of several factors that led the player to attend a U.S. school.

SFU’s reputation as a top academic school also is a limiting factor in recruiting U.S. football players because the academic bar is set higher than many of SFU’s U.S. football counterparts. Even when SFU has a top academic student-athlete in its sights as illustrated by the previous example, other competitive inequities can be a limiting factor. This led one former coach to explain that “You are not going to win in football in the United States; you cannot get Junior College transfers who do not have the grades to be successful at SFU and this is not a sustainable model for success.”

The competitive inequities associated with SFU football’s participation in the U.S. have been demonstrated over many decades across multiple conferences and suggest that a competitive football program is not sustainable in the U.S. These inequities include operating resources, scholarship support, coaching turnover, academic standards, and structural limitations in SFU’s ability to recruit the top American student-athletes to SFU. Although these inequities can impact all NCAA II sports offered by SFU, they appear to have a disproportionate impact on football due to the large team roster numbers that approach 100 players. Smaller SFU teams can achieve greater success with lower U.S. recruiting numbers where a few exceptional “blue chip” recruits can impact success. However, several current SFU varsity teams have no U.S. players on their roster as described herein.

Notwithstanding competitive inequities in football between SFU and their American counterparts, there are policy limitations that preclude SFU’s participation in the NCAA and NAIA moving forward. These limitations are summarized in paragraphs 3.4.2 and 3.4.3.

3.4.2 NCAA

Dual Membership

Following the LSC’s decision to end its affiliation with SFU, SFU requested an interpretation from the NCAA concerning SFU’s ability to hold dual membership with another governing body in the sport of football. On 14 March 2023, the NCAA provided the following interpretation: “In the scenario presented, institutions may hold dual membership in both NCAA Division II and USports. The institution will need to ensure that Division II sport sponsorship requirements outlined in Bylaw 7.3.1.7 are satisfied.”⁷⁷ After this ruling, the NCAA added that “Yes, the same analysis would apply for membership in the NAIA.”⁷⁸ The scenario presented involved the participation of football as a single sport entry in another governing body. It is unclear if the NCAA would grant dual membership status that contemplates additional SFU sports departing the NCAA DII for another governing body, including a minimum of six sports required to become a member of the NAIA and participation in a minimum of two (2) male and two (2) female Association League sports in Canada West, notwithstanding other U SPORTS membership requirements. The fact that the NCAA does not have a single NAIA or U SPORTS institution as a dual member suggests that the NCAA may be unlikely to approve dual membership for SFU beyond the interpretation that has been provided for football alone.

Multidivision Classification

According to the NCAA, “Multidivision classification is the classification in which a sport is classified in a division other than the division in which an institution holds membership (see Bylaw 20.6).”⁷⁹ The rules for multidivision classification are complex and differ according to the sport in question for which reclassification is sought, as well as the primary division in which an institution holds membership.

⁷⁷ NCAA, “Case Summary, Case Number 1189067,” 14 March 2023.

⁷⁸ NCAA, “Case Summary, Case Number 1189067,” 30 June 2023.

⁷⁹ NCAA, “2022-23 NCAA Division I Manual,” 1 August 2022. Online: <http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/D123.pdf> [Last Accessed: 27 July 2023].

A review of the NCAA Manuals, By-Laws, and its *Historical Outline of Multidivision Classification*⁸⁰ suggests that reclassification of the SFU football program to either DI or DIII is not permitted. To confirm this understanding, the Special Advisor asked SFU to request an interpretation from the NCAA concerning the ability of SFU football to be reclassified to either DI or DIII. The following response was provided:

“The institution’s analysis is correct. Based on the information provided, for an institution to have multi-divisional classification (e.g. Division I football and Division II for the remaining sports), the sport must have been classified as a Division I member during the 2010-11 academic year.”⁸¹

The interpretation request included a reference to the *Historical Outline of Multidivision Classification* that prohibits a member of DII from being classified in DIII, thus precluding SFU football from considering such a move. According to the NCAA, it was “Adopted by all three divisions to prohibit a member of Division I from being classified in Division II or III in football and to prohibit a member of Division II from being classified in Division III in football.”⁸²

3.4.3 NAIA

Dual Membership

The Special Advisor interviewed representatives of the NAIA including the Director of Membership Sales and Service, the Commissioner of the Frontier Conference, and the Vice President of Membership Recruitment and Retention. The NAIA’s position on dual membership was communicated in writing as follows:

⁸⁰ NCAA, “Divisional Differences and the History of Multidivision Classification,” undated. Online: <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2013/11/20/divisional-differences-and-the-history-of-multidivision-classification.aspx> [Last Accessed: 27 July 2023].

⁸¹ NCAA, “Case Summary, Case Number 1197239,” 28 July 2023.

⁸² NCAA, “Divisional Differences and the History of Multidivision Classification,” undated. Online: <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2013/11/20/divisional-differences-and-the-history-of-multidivision-classification.aspx> [Last Accessed: 27 July 2023].

“The NAIA has no restrictions on dual membership with any athletic association. Many of our members are also USCAA (United States Collegiate Athletic Association) or NCCAA National Christian College Athletic Association) members. **We do not have any members that have dual membership with NCAA** (emphasis added). To be a member of the NAIA, the institution must sponsor a minimum of six NAIA Championship sports. A new member is required to meet this rule by the beginning of the fourth year of membership. Members were grandfathered into the membership with less when the rule was first adopted. Only one such member remains. The six-sport minimum applies to all other current members. **No exception to this rule has been granted for applicants since the rule was implemented** (emphasis added).”⁸³

The six sports requirement is derived from Article 1 c) of the NAIA By-Laws as follows:

“Membership: Types and Requirements

c. Sponsor and declare an intent to participate in NAIA approved postseason in a minimum of six NAIA championship sports no later than the beginning of the fourth full academic year of active NAIA membership.

NOTE 1: Single-gender institutions must sponsor and declare an intent to participate in NAIA approved postseason in a minimum of three NAIA championship sports no later than the beginning of the fourth full academic year of active NAIA membership.

NOTE 2: An institution falling below the minimum sport sponsorship requirement, due to a failure to sponsor the minimum number of sports or the withdrawal of a declaration of intent to participate in one or more sports, shall be submitted to the NAIA Membership Committee for review. The committee may issue any penalty listed in NAIA Bylaws Article VI, Section C. The committee may recommend to the Council of Presidents the institution be expelled from membership in the NAIA.

NOTE 3: An institution may request from the Council of Presidents, through the NAIA Membership Committee, an exception from this requirement.”⁸⁴

The likelihood of the NAIA granting an exception to this rule appears remote given the fact that no exception to this rule has been granted. Furthermore, the NAIA Director of Membership told the Special Advisor that a similar inquiry for a single sport application was contemplated by another institution, but in the sport of baseball, and the advice provided by the NAIA to the institution was not to apply.

⁸³ NAIA Membership, “Personal email communication,” 8 June 2023.

⁸⁴ NAIA, “NAIA Handbook 2022-23,” 8 January 2022. Online: <https://www.naia.org/legislative/official-policy-handbook> [Last Accessed: 27 July 2023].

Few individuals believe that the NAIA is an optimal fit for SFU football. Concerns were raised about the lack of control that SFU has had with past football conference instability and realignment in both the NAIA and NCAA, cited by one alumnus as “a risk that could re-emerge” and impact SFU football in the future. The NAIA experience has shown that when smaller colleges and universities experience growth, they are more apt to consider moving to a larger conference. According to NAIA representatives, the average enrollment is less than 6,000 students, and “typically, when enrollment hits 8,000-10,000, schools may consider a move to D2.”

Since originally joining the NAIA in 1965, SFU’s enrolment has grown to more than 31,900 undergraduate students and 5,736 graduate students compared with an average enrollment of approximately 2,100 students among football members in the Frontier Conference. There are currently nine football members of the Frontier Conference including five full members and four football-only affiliate members, listed in the table below:

Football Members of the Frontier Conference

Institution	Location	Enrollment
Carroll College	Helena, Montana	1,502
Montana State University - Northern	Havre, Montana	1,207
Montana Technical University	Butte, Montana	2,694
University of Montana Western	Dillon, Montana	1,336
Arizona Christian University*	Glendale, Arizona	820
College of Idaho*	Caldwell, Idaho	1,010
Eastern Oregon University*	La Grande, Oregon	3,743
Rocky Mountain College*	Billings, Montana	894
Southern Oregon University*	Ashland, Oregon	5,696

*Denotes football-only affiliate members of the Frontier Conference.

The NAIA describes itself as “the ONLY athletic association that serves the interests of small colleges,⁸⁵ which appears incongruous with SFU’s enrollment and position as Canada’s #1

⁸⁵ NAIA, “Why Choose the NAIA?” Undated. Online: <https://www.naia.org/why-naia/index> [Last Accessed: 27 July 2023].

Comprehensive University and a “world leader in research, knowledge development, and sustainability.”⁸⁶

Although the NAIA is not the preferred option, some football alumni would like SFU to pursue membership in the NAIA as a “Plan B” and a way to “buy some time” should an application to Canada West and U SPORTS involve a lengthy process or be unsuccessful. This is not a strategic or sustainable option that is in the best interests of SFU for the reasons described herein.

3.5 League Options: Canada

The league options for SFU football to play in Canada include membership in Canada West and U SPORTS which is the national governing body for university sport in Canada. Before the termination of the football program on 4 April 2023, officials with Canada West and U SPORTS confirmed with the Special Advisor that they had been contacted by SFU to explore options for football membership. The feedback provided to SFU at the time was that the University needs to initiate a formal application process, including any requests for exemptions to the membership rules that would be required to allow a single sport entry in football.

Application Process, Canada West and U SPORTS

The Special Advisor had multiple communications with senior representatives of both U SPORTS and Canada West and made a presentation to the Canada West Board of Directors during which the following questions were asked:

Questions for the Canada West Board of Directors⁸⁷

1. We understand the current process and membership requirements. As written, SFU football would not meet the membership requirements – specifically participation in two (2) male and two (2) female Association League sports. This would be a single sport application to join Canada West.

⁸⁶ Simon Fraser University, “Who We Are,” undated. Online: <https://www.sfu.ca/about/who-we-are.html> [Last Accessed: 27 July 2023].

⁸⁷ Special Advisor, Verbal Presentation to Canada West Board of Directors, 1 June 2023.

2. Would Canada West consider a special exemption to this Policy for SFU football and, if so, under what conditions? For example, there could be resistance amongst some members for financial/travel cost reasons but this can be overcome through some type of travel subsidy condition.
3. Given this unique situation, what process and timing does the Board recommend moving forward?

After the meeting, the Special Advisor was told that Canada West is not prepared to answer these questions or provide any guidance until an application process is formally initiated. Similarly, as it concerns special considerations for football, senior officials with U SPORTS advised that the U SPORTS Board and staff would receive the application, noting that “They must receive it and let the process play out.” However, the U SPORTS Board is not prepared to intercede in the process and provide an exemption to the current membership rules. An application by SFU must be voted on by the full U SPORTS membership and not just football-playing institutions. An application for SFU football to become a single sport member of U SPORTS would require a two-thirds majority vote for acceptance. Neither organization ruled out a path to “yes” and this could also include conditions such as travel subsidies and other membership assurances given SFU’s departure from Canada to the NCAA in 2010.

Other feedback included comments about an intense lobbying campaign focused on U SPORTS and Canada West from SFU stakeholders and the broader Canadian football community. For example, one Canada West representative commented about being “bombarded by media and alumni.” This caused Canada West to issue the following media statement.

“Canada West and its members are empathetic to those who have been impacted by a recent decision by SFU on the sport of football. Canada West has an application process for considering new members as outlined in Policy 1 of its Operations Manual. Currently, Canada West does not have any applications for review. At this time, Canada West will be making no further comment regarding its membership or potential applicants.”⁸⁸

Canada West has not waived its public or private position as it concerns the membership process for SFU football. However, U SPORTS and Canada West officials indicated a willingness to

⁸⁸ Canada West Media Statement, 11 April 2023.

work together on reviewing a joint or stepped application process involving both organizations. For example, “timelines can be adjusted earlier or later,” but such requests must be made through the application process. For example, a U SPORTS official commented that “Both groups (U SPORTS, Canada West) share the opinion that they want to try and move together on this (as it relates to process and timing).” For example, rather than wait until the full Canada West membership process is exhausted, they would try to align the processes and it would be “ideal to come to the same conclusions.” This is a show of good faith on behalf of the leadership of Canada West and U SPORTS but in no way should be considered as support for the merits, or potential success, of the application itself.

Membership Rules – U SPORTS

Policy 10.10 governs the rules concerning U SPORTS membership including application requirements. Key excerpts of provisions in the Policy related to a potential application by SFU for football are listed as follows:

“10.10.1 APPLICATION AND PROBATIONARY STATUS”

- 10.10.1.1 Prospective new Members must submit their membership application documentation and \$5,000 non-refundable application fee to U SPORTS by December 31st (See 10.10.3 for Application Form).
- 10.10.1.2 Following receipt and review of the application, a site visit of prospective Members will occur between January and May. Prospective Members are responsible for the associated costs for a site visit by a U SPORTS board and staff member.
- 10.10.1.3 Following the site visit, a recommendation to approve, defer, or reject the application shall be prepared for the membership by the U SPORTS Board.
- 10.10.1.4 The membership application will be considered at the Annual Meeting in June, and must receive two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
- 10.10.1.5 Once accepted as a Member, a fifty thousand dollar (\$50,000) entrance fee is to be paid to U SPORTS.

In addition to the application fees as noted, there are ongoing Member costs including “Each U SPORTS Member is required to pay a Basic Fee, and, for each sport recognized by U SPORTS in which the Member participates (i.e. each sport listed on the Member’s ‘Declaration of Participation’ form) a Sport Participation Fee, a Travel Pool Fee, a Coaches Association/Sport Technical Sub-Committee Fee, and an Electronic Branding Fee.”⁸⁹ These additional fees are listed as follows:

Basic Fee:	\$13,367.34
Sport Participation Fee for football:	\$2,502.02
Travel Pool Fee:	\$456.50
Coaching and Sport Excellence Fee	\$100.00
Electronic Branding Fee (per sport):	\$55.00
Total (Ongoing Costs):	\$16,480.86

When the total annual membership costs (\$16,480.86) are added to the application costs⁹⁰ (\$55,000), the first-year investment required is \$71,480.86.⁹¹

The timelines provided in Article 10.10.1 suggest that a return to play in 2024 as a member of U SPORTS is not feasible. However, as noted previously, U SPORTS and Canada West indicated flexibility concerning timelines if an expedited application procedure is requested. The potential for a concurrent application process to compete in both Canada West and U SPORTS would be necessary for any chance of SFU competing in 2024, but this is remote. The U SPORTS Conditions of Membership require that Applicants must first be a Member of a U SPORTS Regional Association. Unless there is an exception to this requirement including the potential for a concurrent application, the opportunity for SFU football to compete both as a Member of Canada West and U SPORTS in 2024 would not be feasible given the rigorous process and time required for application to Canada West.

⁸⁹ U SPORTS, “Policy 10.10 Membership,” August 2019.

⁹⁰ Note: The applicant also is responsible for the travel costs associated with a site visit by U SPORTS staff.

⁹¹ Note: The U SPORTS fees are in addition to Canada West Membership Fees.



There are additional complexities as it concerns a potential SFU application. The Conditions of Membership provided in the U SPORTS Policy 10.10 preclude a football-only request for membership including the following Articles excerpted from the Policy.

10.10.2 CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

- 10.10.2.1 Applicants must be a Member of a U SPORTS Regional Association, and the application for U SPORTS Membership must be endorsed in writing by the Regional Association.

- 10.10.2.4 New members must declare at least two male and two female U SPORTS sports one of which must be a team sport. In the third year and beyond, new U SPORTS Members must declare at least two male and two female U SPORTS sports including one male and one female team sport.

- 10.10.2.5 Demonstrated competitiveness with U SPORTS opponents (provide records against such opponents), and/or a plan to become competitive within a six (6) year window.

- 10.10.2.6 Demonstrated campus and community support for the athletic program (e.g. event attendance figures, media support, sponsorship support, etc.).

- 10.10.2.7 Demonstrated evidence of commitment towards gender equity (e.g. budgets, coaching salaries, financial aid to student-athletes, current equity policy, etc.).

- 10.10.2.11 Demonstrated availability of suitable facilities to host U SPORTS events.

- 10.10.2.12 U SPORTS members are not permitted to play in the NCAA in sports that are offered by U SPORTS. (Note: this refers to membership and not to exhibition or non-conference play between U SPORTS and NCAA teams).

The minimum sport requirements and conditions of Article 10.10.2.12 that preclude participation in certain NCAA sports are the biggest hurdles to overcome and the areas where an exemption would be necessary to facilitate a successful application for football. Fulfilling requirements towards gender equity provided in Article 10.10.2.7 also could be problematic given the single sport, single-gender application in the sport of football. Furthermore, although SFU completed a recent \$20M stadium renovation, the current field conforms to American rules and would have to be expanded to conform to Canadian rules. The cost of replacing the artificial turf must be considered to meet these conditions of membership. The enlargement of the field could also displace the stadium track

which has implications for the SFU track and field program as well as related community programming in the stadium.

The Articles concerning dual membership were added to the Policy following a vote in 2009 by CIS members in favour of the new provisions; the vote was prompted by expressions of interest by SFU and UBC who were contemplating dual membership in the NCAA at the time. The rationale in support of this vote is explained as follows:

“Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), the organization which governs high-performance athletics at Canadian universities, sent a bold message to schools looking to join the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) at their annual general meeting on Thursday. Voting 55-20 in favour, CIS members instituted a policy which places stringent restrictions on schools who pursue membership in both the CIS and NCAA. Under the new rules, member schools are only allowed to play in the NCAA in sports not offered by the CIS.”⁹²

This comment highlights the current issue facing SFU as it relates to a single sport application in the sport of football. Under Article 10.10.2.12, SFU is not permitted to become a member of U SPORTS because SFU competes in NCAA DII in several sports offered by U SPORTS including basketball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, and softball. The article goes on to say that “While the new rule is not an outright ban on dual membership, it essentially makes the pursuit of the NCAA an all-or-nothing proposal since the pool of sports offered by the NCAA but not by the CIS is very narrow.” A statement at the time of the vote by CIS CEO Marg McGregor indicated “...we will not be the league of convenience. We want to be the league of choice.” As a result of the current Membership Policy, SFU must request and be granted an exemption to several Conditions of Membership as described herein to be accepted as a U SPORTS member in football.

⁹² UBC Insiders, “CIS restricts dual membership with NCAA,” 12 June 2009. Online: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/ubcinsiders/2009/06/12/cis-restricts-dual-membership-with-ncaa/> [Last Accessed: 25 July 2023].

Membership Rules – Canada West

Membership in the Canada West conference is governed by the organization's By-Laws and Policy #1: Membership. The path to membership in Canada West includes the following conditions and qualifications for membership included in the Canada West By-Laws.

- "2.2 Probationary Members – Probationary Membership will be available only to post-secondary institutions that meet the following qualifications:
- a) Is a post-secondary institution of learning whose primary purpose is the grant of undergraduate degrees and offers full-time programs, which lead to degrees, diplomas or certificates satisfactory to the Association and Canadian Interuniversity Sport;
 - b) Is a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC);
 - c) Is eligible for membership in U SPORTS;
 - d) Agree to participate annually in a minimum of two (2) male and two (2) female Association league sports, and operates with a gender equity at the institutional level;
 - e) Has applied for membership within the Association in accordance with the Association's Membership Policy;
 - f) Ensures all participants are properly registered within their own post-secondary institution and subsequently with the Association;
 - g) Ensures all participants (student-athletes, coaches, administrators and support staff) complies and agrees to abide by the Association's and the U SPORTS By-Laws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations;
 - h) Complies with and agrees to abide by the Association's and the U SPORTS By-Laws, policies, rules and regulations;
 - i) Obtains approval from the Association to hold or apply for membership in other intercollegiate associations;
 - j) Has been granted Probationary Membership status upon a three-quarter (3/4) majority vote of the voting delegates at an AGM; and
 - k) Has been granted Probationary Membership status within the U SPORTS prior to the start of their second year of probation with the Association."⁹³

Currently, the Conditions and Qualification of Membership, specifically 2.2 c) and 2.2 d) would preclude SFU's participation in Canada West and would require an exemption supported by a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of the Canada West delegates.

⁹³ Canada West Universities Athletic Association, "BY-LAWS," August 2022.

Policy #1: Membership provides a systematic list of steps associated with the application process for new members. Key Articles are excerpted below.⁹⁴

“2.2 Application Process

- 2.2.1 The Canada West Office must receive a letter of intent for ‘Canada West Membership’ from institutions who are applying to become members of the association. The letter of intent must outline the year the institution wishes to enter Canada West as a probationary member, the sports in which the institution wishes to compete, and acknowledgement by both the senior administration and the Director of Athletics that they have read and understand the application process contained in the Canada West By-Laws, Polices and Procedures.
- 2.2.2 Within 14 days of receiving the letter of intent, the Canada West Office will confirm receipt of the letter of intent and forward the applicant a complete application package and confirmation of the required application fee. A timeline will be determined by the Canada West Board of Directors that outlines when the applicant needs to complete and submit the required application package to the Canada West Office, including the initial application fee (2.3.1). Applicants must comply with all aspects of the application process.
- 2.2.3 Upon receipt of a completed application package, the Canada West Board of Directors, in consultation with appropriate staff/committees, will vote on the acceptance of the application and determine if the application will proceed or if it will be denied. The applicant must receive Board of Director support by a majority vote in order to proceed in the process.
- 2.2.4 If the application is approved for further review and evaluation, the Board of Directors shall convene a Membership Committee comprised of (...continues).
- 2.2.5 The President will inform Sport Committee of the number of applications that have been approved by the Board, immediately following the September Canada West Board meeting and ask Sport Committee to initiate the applicable process for each Sport contained in the Application Package (Article 5 – FULL MEMBER ADDING A SPORT/NEW APPLICANT SPORT-BY-SPORT APPROVAL).
- 2.2.6 Upon receipt of the second application fee (2.3.2), the Canada West Membership Committee shall in consultation with the applicant, coordinate a site visit.
- 2.2.7 Based on the information contained in the application package, appropriate consultation and the site visit, the Canada West Membership Committee shall prepare a preliminary report and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors of Canada West as to the suitability of the application.

⁹⁴ Note: Refer to the Canada West Policy #1: Membership for a complete listing of all steps associated with the Application Process.

- 2.2.7.1.1 The Board of Directors shall review the Membership Committee's report. The Board may reject a membership application if it believes the application does not meet the application requirements.
- 2.2.8 If the application is acceptable, the Membership Committee report and the full application shall be forwarded to the general assembly for discussion at the Regular Meeting no later than 14 days prior to the start of the Regular Meeting.
- 2.2.9 The Applicant shall be provided with the opportunity to make a presentation to the general assembly (...continues).
- 2.2.10 The Membership Committee's report and the results of Section 5 deliberations (including a sport by sport vote for new applicants) shall be communicated to the Applicant in a written summary.
- 2.2.11 The Applicant will have until March 31st to submit an addendum to their original application to address any concerns or questions raised by the Membership Committee, Sport Committee or the general assembly.
- 2.2.12 Based upon the information contained in the application package, the addendum to the application, results of Section 5 deliberations, and the site visit the membership committee will forward a final report and recommendation to the Board of Directors.
- 2.2.13 The Board of Directors shall review the Membership Committee's final report and forward the Membership Committee's report and the addendum to the application documents to the general assembly for a decision at the Annual General Meeting.
- 2.2.14 A $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the voting delegates at the AGM is required to gain probationary member status. No institution has the right to admission to Canada West, even if the conditions for membership are met. The membership at the Annual General Meeting may reject a membership application if it is deemed not to be in the best interest of Canada West."⁹⁵

This is a rigorous, multi-step process including several waypoints where the application can be denied, either by the Board of Directors or the Canada West members. Acceptance also requires "a sport by sport vote for new applicants" according to Article 2.2.10 as well as a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of the voting delegates. The lengthy timing associated with the application process including a vote at the AGM would make a return to play in 2024 for SFU football impossible unless exceptions to this process and timing are granted. Therefore, the earliest projected timeline for return to play if the application is successful is anticipated to be 2025.

⁹⁵ Canada West Universities Athletic Association, Policy #1: Membership," undated. Online: <https://www.canadawest.org/files/opsmanual/1.%20Membership.pdf> [Last Accessed: 25 July 2023].

Additional application requirements are outlined in “Article 5. FULL MEMBER ADDING A SPORT/NEW APPLICANT SPORT-BY-SPORT APPROVAL.” This outlines additional timelines and processes that must be followed for all league sports and thus would apply to a football application by SFU. For example, additional requirements include the submission of “a detailed operating, staffing, athletic financial aid, and student-athlete services budget for the next three years for the sport in question” (Article 5.1.2.2). A copy of the institution’s recruitment plan for the sport in question along with a copy of the marketing plan, sport-specific budget, and sport-specific facility report also is required. The Membership Policy #1 includes an Athletic Department Operational Budget Template, Athletic Financial Aid Budget Template, Team Competitiveness Template, and Facility Template that must be completed as part of the application process. The Membership Policy #1 indicates “From time to time, the Canada West Board of Directors may elect to modify the timelines outlined in 5.1-5.4 if it is deemed in the best interest of the association (e.g. assists with scheduling, league balance, or some other direct benefit to the association).”

The fees associated with the application process are summarized as follows:

Initial Application Fee:	\$30,000.00
Second Application Fee:	\$70,000.00
Membership Acceptance Fee:	\$213,000.00
Total:	\$313,000.00 ⁹⁶

The initial application fee is due at the time of application and is non-refundable. If the Board of Directors approves the initial application, a second fee of \$70,000 must be paid in full before a site visit.⁹⁷ The Membership Acceptance Fee provided above is for the sport of football and “is based on 75% of the average sport-specific operating costs, as identified in the Canada West Comparative Data Report. The Comparative Data Report is a measure that is based on actual Canada West member costs and is reflective of the costs of operating Canada West programs.”⁹⁸ The total one-

⁹⁶ Note: Total excludes annual Canada West membership dues.

⁹⁷ Canada West Universities Athletic Association, “Policy #1: Membership, Article 2.3.2,” undated. Online: <https://www.canadawest.org/files/opsmanual/1.%20Membership.pdf> [Last Accessed: 25 July 2023].

⁹⁸ Canada West Universities Athletic Association, “Policy #1: Membership, APPENDIX F NEW APPLICANT SPORT SPECIFIC FEES,” undated. Online: <https://www.canadawest.org/files/opsmanual/1.%20Membership.pdf> [Last

time fees associated with a successful application are \$313,000. The total cost of the application process including both U SPORTS and Canada West is \$368,000.⁹⁹

Feedback on League Options in Canada

Participating in Canada West and U SPORTS is the preferred option amongst SFU football alumni, and is supported by many former coaches and football student-athletes. Myriad reasons are offered in support of football competing in Canada rather than the United States, including the following:

- Greater sustainability in the Canada West conference, and not at the whim of a U.S. Conference;
- Better opportunities for student-athletes to build personal networks in Canada;
- Natural competitive rivalries against Canadian universities that will garner more campus and community interest in the football program;
- More cost-effective including travel and no need for currency exchange;
- Opportunities to generate local, regional, and national exposure to attract greater interest from Canadian businesses;
- Alignment of values with U SPORTS including a focus on the *student*-athlete experience in Canada;
- Greater alignment with the amateur football ecosystem in British Columbia and Canada; and,
- Structural limitations and competitive disadvantages of competing as a Canadian institution in the United States.

Survey responses from student-athletes on the football team in support of competing in Canada West and U SPORTS include the following:

“Would be able to compete within the country live in.”

“I always felt like our competition level is on the same level as the U SPORTS/Canada West teams.”

“Easier travel for the team and possibly cheaper.”

“I think it’s most feasible for SFU to travel within Canada. If the NCAA is no longer an option then Canwest would be the best option and give the best opportunities for our guys professionally.”

Accessed: 25 July 2023]. Note: The Membership Acceptance Fee is based on 2019 data and may be higher in 2023 when inflation is calculated.

⁹⁹ Note: Total fees exclude annual recurring membership and sport-specific fees.

“Heightens rivalry and competitive.”

“It gives us a better opportunity to win as the teams will have similar funding and talent and as we saw in the Shrum Bowl last year the game was very close.”

“I prefer U SPORTS because I would like to compete against other Canadian universities and have the opportunity to potentially play in the Vanier Cup. As well, I feel the SFU football program would be more competitive in the Canadian league.”

“I believe it makes most sense for our situation. As it has been made known that US teams are not willing to fly to BC.”

“I believe we would be a better fit and be more competitive in U SPORTS.”

“A Canadian school should be in a Canadian league.”

3.6 SFU Football Alumni Society (the ‘Society’)

The SFU Football Alumni Society is governed by a Constitution and Bylaws including an Executive Board and Officers. The purposes of the Society are as follows:

“The purposes of the Society are:

- To raise funds to be utilized for the granting of Athletic Financial Aid to deserving student-athletes at Simon Fraser University.
- To promote and manage the Society’s primary annual fundraising events, the Warrington Dinner and the Simon Fraser University Football Alumni Cutler/Passaglia Golf Tournament.”¹⁰⁰

Representatives of the Society have been active in their attempts to reinstate football at SFU including their role in supporting an injunction against SFU in the B.C. Supreme Court. Although the injunction was unsuccessful, the Society has remained active in its attempts to find solutions that will enable the football team to be reinstated. The Special Advisor has had several meetings with executives of the Society, as well as many SFU football alumni who are not actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the Society. The Society has a clear preference for SFU to play in Canada

¹⁰⁰ Clansmen Football Alumni Society Constitution and Bylaws, undated.

as a member of Canada West and U SPORTS. This preference is supported by most of the SFU football alumni interviewed by the Special Advisor. Although the Society is a proponent of repatriating the football program to Canada, they are aware of the membership limitations of joining Canada West and U SPORTS without other SFU varsity sports being a part of the membership application. The Society would like SFU to consider the NAIA as a backup plan; however, this is not a feasible option for the reasons described herein.

The Society has been active in cultivating the local business community including “a commitment of \$3 million over the next 5 years.”¹⁰¹ This represents a significant annual commitment of \$600,000 towards reinstating the program and supporting initiatives “to create a sustainable fundraising model” as suggested by one Society member. For example, the Society envisions that some of this money could be used to support a professional fundraising position for football. The Society has also suggested that some of this funding could be used in a way that provides support beyond football exclusively. For example, shoring up specific areas of student-athlete support to benefit student-athletes on other varsity teams as well as football. The designation of any fundraising by the Society requires collaboration with the Department.

The Society acknowledges that the \$3M in verbal commitments has been a result of the football crisis at SFU which has been a “rallying cry” to support the program to save it. The bulk of this support (\$2.5M) is from a small number of local benefactors who care about the football ecosystem in British Columbia. The Society also acknowledges that “we have to do more on our end,” and historical contributions from the Society “have been relatively flat over the last ten years.”

Donations to SFU from the Society totaled \$503,856.25 since 1992, which amounts to \$16,253 per year. According to the SFU Advancement Office, “In total (including those funded by FAS), SFU has 13 donor-funded endowments for football and two annual awards.”¹⁰² These endowments represent important support for many deserving student-athletes and the Society is committed to doing more. For example, through its fundraising events, the Society hopes to increase its minimal

¹⁰¹ Email correspondence to the Special Advisor from SFU Football Alumni Society, 6 June 2023.

¹⁰² Email correspondence to the Special Advisor from SFU Advancement and Alumni Affairs, 23 May 2023.

annual contributions to SFU football endowments to \$50,000. Moreover, “\$142,000 has been pledged through our #1Day4SFUFootball Campaign in April 2023.”¹⁰³ The Society believes that with the reinstatement of the program, this can be a successful annual fundraiser. The \$142,000 is part of the \$3M in total pledges indicated by the Society and includes over 800 pledges that are contingent on the reinstatement of football at SFU. In total, the Society has gone from about 800 people on its email list to over 7,000.

The Society is firmly committed to increasing its fundraising capacity and believes it can be a catalyst to raise other funds for small capital projects with support from SFU advancement. However, the relationship between the Society and SFU has been strained and mutual trust must be established to collaboratively leverage each organization’s strengths. Currently, there is no formalized agreement between the Society and SFU and the lack of coordination in fundraising is evidence of this. For example, fundraising strategies have not been developed collaboratively and there is no information shared about donor prospects. According to SFU advancement staff, “there is no line of sight to funding (donations) that go to the SFU Football Alumni Society,” and this has caused some confusion amongst alumni and duplication of fundraising asks. A fully integrated fundraising strategy between the Society and SFU is good business, donor-centered, and will result in greater success than two fundraising processes that operate in silos.

One model that both SFU and the Society may wish to consider is the approach taken at Carleton University in Ottawa between the ‘Old Crows’ Football Inc. and the university. The Old Crows “are lifelong Ravens who are the driving force behind the Ravens football program,” and “are also the proud founding financial supporters of the return of Ravens Football through Old Crows Football Inc., a not-for-profit group of Ravens alumni and community supporters.”¹⁰⁴ A formalized agreement was struck between the Old Crows and Carleton University as one of several prerequisites to reinstating football. An illustration of the cooperation can be seen on the Carleton Athletics website which hosts a dedicated page for the Old Crows Football Inc.

¹⁰³ Email correspondence to Special Advisor from SFU Football Alumni Society, 27 July 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Carleton University, “Old Crows.” Online: <https://goravens.ca/raven-4-life/old-crows/> [Last Accessed: 8 August 2023].

On 24 May 2023, the Society submitted a strategic plan to the Department that it had developed for SFU football, including the Society's assessment of key priorities for the program. The plan speaks to "committing to a common vision and fostering collaboration amongst the stakeholders."¹⁰⁵ However, the plan was developed in complete isolation from the Department which provides further evidence of the lack of collaboration that currently exists between SFU and the Society. The plan states that "No members of the Simon Fraser University administration nor members of the Athletic Department were contacted to provide input for the report."¹⁰⁶ The plan identifies the following eight priorities for the football program as determined solely by the Society:

"The following items have been identified as requiring immediate attention as regards both committing to a common vision and fostering collaboration amongst the stakeholders.

- Coaches' Salaries: Need complete (sic) salaries for 1 Head Coach and 6 Assistant Coaches
- Scholarship Funding: Additional funds are required to move towards the maximum of 36 scholarships as allowed under NCAA DII rules
- NCAA University caliber scoreboard
- FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) Games: Scheduling of FCS non-conference games with payments from the FCS program going in its entirety to the football program for agreeing to schedule a game of that nature
- Transparency in Athletic Department budgeting and allocations
- Realize untapped revenue streams: Anticipate and leverage revenues from new stadium and game day events (naming rights, tickets, merchandise, concessions, 50/50 raffles...What does the football program get?)
- Consistently expand the Operating Budget year over year
- Ongoing facilities upgrades (example: new turf)"¹⁰⁷

The Special Advisor reviewed meeting notes that were prepared by the Senior Director of Athletics and Recreation in advance of a scheduled meeting between the Senior Director and the Society to discuss the Society's plan. The notes reflect the intention to provide the following responses:

¹⁰⁵ SFU Football Alumni Society, "SFU Football Strategic Plan for On Field & Off Field Success," 24 May 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

“I want to thank you for your passion and interest in SFU Football, and for the time you have put into presenting your strategic plan.

I have read it, I have reflected on it.

My observation and understanding of your plan is it is not strategic in nature, rather a request or demand for additional funding from the University to the tune of \$1.3M over the next 5 years.

I am interested, however, in having a healthy dialogue, not a debate. And rather go through the report page by page, I have made the respectful decision to take the approach of providing you with some facts and share with you the strategic priorities for SFU A&R. And then let’s discuss how we can move forward in a positive and strategic way.

We all want the same thing — we want success on and off the field, and we need to define success with tangible and achievable goals, and in doing so, ensure the sustainability of the football program.”¹⁰⁸

These comments are conciliatory even though the Department was not consulted in the development of the plan. Furthermore, the notes include extensive financial information intended to help the Society better understand investments in the football program and athletics generally.

This factual information is summarized in the meeting note as follows:

“Some facts

Over the past 5 years (2016 – 2020)

Total budget for A+R is approx. \$11.3M

Revenue sources include:

- Base funding from AVPSI, VPA, SFU — increased by 16%
- A+R (student) fees make up approx. 70% of funding
- Net contribution from VPA has increased by 39%
- Total contribution from university just under \$8M
- Revenues from A+R (campus, facility rentals, locker rentals, tickets, sponsorship, etc.) is approx. \$2.7M
- Any deficit is covered by fundraising accounts and/or VPSI office

SFU A+R total expenses have increased by \$2.25M or 25%

Salaries + Benefits have increased by \$1.2M or 16%

- Currently spent \$6.2M on salaries across the department, with just over \$2M on coaching staff
- Football salaries make up approx. 16% of coaching salaries, at just under \$325k
- Athletic Team Travel costs have increased by \$250k or 17%

¹⁰⁸ SFU Senior Director, Athletics and Recreation, “Notes for Meeting with SFU Football Alumni Society,” June 2022.

- Equipment and Supplies have almost doubled in same time frame, increasing from \$491k to \$940k
- Revenues have increased by \$1.3M or 30%
- Operations budget across A+R (non payroll) have increased by 27%
- Football operations has increased by 7%, and make up 19% of the total operations budget
- In the 2021 season, the university provided over\$700k to ensure varsity teams could compete and travel; it included setting up and coordinating a travel testing clinic on site to allow our athletes to test
- Football’s total budget support is over \$1M (just over \$700k for operating budget and \$300k in scholarship support)
- The university is currently conducting an internal financial review of A+R; looking at structure and funding model and how we do our business; new leadership across the university.”¹⁰⁹

This information clearly illustrates SFU’s investments in football and its commitment to the program. Furthermore, the 2022-23 operating budget for football rose to \$1,056,796, plus another \$438,250 in athletic scholarship support. Other contributions to football and athletics summarized in the meeting note include the following:

“Contributions to Athletics with a direct and indirect positive impact on football

- \$20M stadium, \$10M was funded by the University
- \$2M locker room, training room and storage
- Additional FT S+C (Strength & Conditioning) coach
- Additional Athletic Therapy and sport medicine support
- New office space for football that allows football to operate more efficiently
- Recapitalization of endowment surplus, resulting in \$45M reinvested in principle for endowments
- For athletics this was an 18% increase; for football this equates to a 16% increase in scholarships
- We have rebranded Athletics and secured a 5 year Nike Team deal which has had a far reaching impact on our student-athletes and our program
- And we are getting ready to start a \$34M renovation to the Lorne Davies Complex.”¹¹⁰

Despite these enhancements to football, the program has remained uncompetitive — a symptom of structural competitive inequities associated with football’s participation in the United States.

¹⁰⁹ SFU Senior Director, Athletics and Recreation, “Notes for Meeting with SFU Football Alumni Society,” June 2022.

¹¹⁰ SFU Senior Director, Athletics and Recreation, “Notes for Meeting with SFU Football Alumni Society,” June 2022.

American football teams enjoy a host of competitive advantages over SFU including higher budgets and recruiting advantages, among others.

Of concern in the meeting note is “Any deficit is covered by fundraising accounts and/or VPSI Office.” Fundraising accounts to augment the football operating budget have been fully expended and there remains a small deficit in football’s “Fund21” fundraising account. More importantly, historical transfers from the Vice-Provost and Associate VP, Students and International (‘VPSI’) have run their course and will no longer be available to offset deficits in the Department given mandated budget cuts to many non-academic units at SFU including the Student Services unit; this explains why budget transfers to the Department are no longer feasible.

Had the Lone Star Conference not ended their agreement with SFU, the Department would have been facing a 2023 budget deficit of \$1.77 million suggesting the need for aggressive cost-cutting given the fact that the deficits would no longer be offset by the VPSI office. It is likely and probable that SFU might have had to entertain cuts to varsity teams as part of its strategy to reduce its expenses had the LSC decision not materialized. As discussed in Chapter 2.5: ‘Finances and Capacity,’ the Department was mandated to reduce the 2023-24 budget by \$700,000 which was accomplished through cuts to staff positions and other budget reduction measures. However, a deficit of more than \$1M remained. Eliminating football thus served to reduce the deficit and effectively balance the budget along with the other aforementioned cuts.

Despite the inherent financial challenges, there remains an opportunity to generate significant revenues for football including \$3M in pledges, as well as other revenue-generating opportunities such as enhanced sponsorship, and naming rights (including SFU’s \$20M stadium), among others. In her meeting note, the Senior Director of Athletics and Recreation planned to have the Society focus on scholarships and facility enhancements including helping to identify support to sponsor a scoreboard in the amount of \$500,000 — an “untapped revenue stream” identified by the Society.

3.7 SFU Football Sustainability

Introduction

The Special Advisor was tasked to review the recent operating budgets for SFU football and assess the type of future program investments required to operate a competitive and sustainable varsity football program at SFU. The Special Advisor has concluded that football is not feasible or sustainable in the United States, thus program investments to operate outside of Canada are not considered. Therefore, new program investments are considered as they relate to SFU football participating in Canada West and U SPORTS.

Sustainability — Operating in the United States

The analysis provided in Chapter 3.3: 'Football Budget Analysis' and Chapter 3.4: 'League Options: United States' together with the Deloitte Benchmarking Report and other factors described herein leads to the conclusion that it is not feasible for SFU to operate a competitive and sustainable football program in the United States. Despite increases in the football budget, including those emanating from a 2017 review of the program, the team has not enjoyed competitive success.

The lack of competitive success is antithetical to the student-athlete experience as well as the Department's strategic objective to "Plan for student-athletes to win in the classroom, in competition & in the community."¹¹¹ This observation is supported by feedback from those closest to the football program including many former players, coaches, and members of the team; most agree that the student-athlete experience should be the most important KPI to measure in a university environment.

SFU football players have not reached their highest potential in their chosen sport and the lack of competitive success — together with other factors — can impact their student-athlete

¹¹¹ SFU, "Unleashing Our Potential: A Strategic Plan for SFU Athletics & Recreation 2016-2021," undated.

experience. For example, in a survey conducted by the Special Advisor, almost 60% of players on the team described their student-athlete experience as “Terrible,” “Poor,” or “Average” (Appendix B: ‘Football Student-Athlete Survey Results’). A majority of players who responded to the survey were highly critical of factors related to football and their athletics experience;¹¹² by comparison, there were more positive comments made about their academic experience. Thus, it can be reasonably concluded that the negativity associated with football and athletics is the principal driver of the poor student-athlete experience ratings.

In the same SFU player survey, 78% of players on the team described the SFU football program as “Much worse” or “Somewhat worse” than NCAA DII counterparts. Less than a quarter (22%) of respondents considered the SFU football program to be on par with their NCAA DII peers, and no one considered the SFU football program to be “Somewhat better” or “Much better” (Appendix B: ‘Football Student-Athlete Survey Results’). Although the impact of losing is most directly felt by those closest to the program including players and coaches, these impacts are felt by others in the SFU community including staff, alumni, and students. There are broader impacts on SFU’s reputation and organizational culture. Therefore, continuing to field a football team in the United States that is not competitive is inconsistent with four of the Department’s five pillars of the 2022 strategic mandate including student-athlete success, reputation, organizational culture, and financial sustainability.

Sustainability — Operating in Canada

Despite the grave assessment of the team’s ability to compete in the United States, the prospect of building the program in Canada offers more promise and a path to sustainability —*if* the team is granted membership in Canada West and U SPORTS. The following discussion provides a basis for the assessment that SFU football can be competitive and sustainable in Canada.

Simply put, SFU football’s current operating budget and scholarship support goes further in Canada, notwithstanding other advantages. Several efficiencies and savings can be realized by

¹¹² Note: Student-Athletes were asked to rate the quality of their student-athlete experience prior to 4 April 2023.

operating in Canada versus the United States including currency conversion and travel costs, among others. These factors were raised by multiple staff members in the Department not only about football, but also potential savings for other SFU varsity sports that should be examined given the financial issues that have amplified over several years. One staff member indicated that a trip to play in Alaska can take upwards of 12 hours of travel time including having to bus teams to Seattle for the flight. Beyond the expense, this is a significant inconvenience to student-athletes and accompanying staff. For example, one player on the football team noted: “the ridiculous travel schedule which negatively impacted our study time.”

SFU football competed in Canadian Interuniversity Sport between 2002-2009 before joining the NCAA DII in 2010. Although SFU compiled a 16-47-2 record, the team participated in two Canada West championships and won the Hardy Trophy in 2003. In 2003, the team was one win away from competing in the Vanier Cup but was defeated in the Uteck Bowl National Semi-Final game. The team had three winless seasons between 2005-2007 which corresponded with three head coaches, a program limitation that has been discussed herein. With the necessary investments and greater coaching continuity, SFU football can be competitive in Canada West and have a realistic chance to progress to a Vanier Cup National Championship.

One of the most important non-financial advantages of playing in Canada is the operational certainty of competing in a conference that has exhibited a long history of stability. SFU football would not be disadvantaged in Canada as it has been in the United States where conferences have either folded or, in the LSC experience, SFU was not renewed in favour of another U.S. school that was considered more operationally convenient.

Benchmarking SFU Football Finances

An important input to SFU’s ability to sustain a competitive program, beyond having a reliable conference to call home, is its operating budget and scholarship support to build a recruiting pipeline. These are critical performance indicators related to SFU’s ability to field a competitive and sustainable football program in Canada. To this end, the Special Advisor compared the SFU

football operating budget to other Canada West football members on several financial variables using data from a 2019 proprietary Review of U SPORTS Football¹¹³ completed by MGSS as well as information provided through interviews with twelve current or former athletic directors, football coaches, and administrators associated with U SPORTS programs.

One Athletic Director of a Canada West university suggested that the operating budget range to be competitive in Canada West is “between \$1M and \$1.5M (excluding AFAs).” The Special Advisor agrees with this range based on an exhaustive analysis of Canadian university football budget information and interviews with those who are expertly versed in U SPORTS football. A caveat to this budget range is that it does not include additional costs that would be required for the Department to operate within two entirely different governance structures: U SPORTS for SFU football and NCAA DII for all other SFU varsity programs. These incremental investments are summarized later in this chapter.

SFU’s 2022 football operating budget was \$1,056,785, putting the program in the suggested budget range to be competitive, albeit at the lower end. It is important to understand that universities construct their football budgets in many different ways and a comparison between universities is not always an ‘apples to apples’ budget comparison. For example, some universities include Integrated Support Team costs (such as therapy, medical, mental health, etc.) directly in their football budgets, whereas other universities account for this centrally within their general athletic department budgets. SFU football does not include these comparable costs directly in its budget, although the services are provided by the Department; thus, the SFU football budget could appear misleadingly low when compared to programs that account for these additional costs as line items in their football budgets. As noted in Chapter 3.3: ‘Football Budget Analysis,’ it would be helpful for the SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation to account for these support costs directly in the varsity team budgets where the services are rendered. This will allow SFU to better determine the full cost to deliver their respective varsity programs, including football. This practice will also help to address the issue of varsity program resource equity that has been raised by many staff in the Department.

¹¹³ McLaren Global Sport Solutions Inc., “U SPORTS Football Review,” 18 September 2019.

SFU's 2022 football budget ranks higher than 19 other university football programs in Canada, and lower than 7 others.¹¹⁴ However, this is an ineffectual comparison given the significant differences in geography and travel required across the country. Travel budgets in Canada West are the highest in Canada; for example, Canada West travel budgets are significantly higher than Ontario University Athletics ('OUA') football travel given the close proximity of most OUA football schools along the 401 Highway corridor. Some regular season travel budgets in Canada West football are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars whereas regular season travel budgets in other conferences are much lower.

The Special Advisor benchmarked SFU's 2022 football budget against the six Canada West football programs which yielded the following key indicators:

- SFU's 2022 football budget ranks below four of the six Canada West programs;¹¹⁵
- The median Canada West football budget is approximately \$1,221,000.¹¹⁶ SFU's 2022 football budget is \$164,215 below the Canada West median;
- SFU's regular season league travel expense ranks first (i.e. highest) amongst Canada West football programs;
- SFU football employed 3 full-time coaches in 2022 which is competitive with many U SPORTS and Canada West programs;
- The total SFU football coaching expense (\$382,272) is almost \$47,000 below the mean of all football programs in Canada (\$429,240). SFU's coaching budget is higher than three other Canada West programs;
- SFU's recruiting expenses are competitive with Canada West. The average expense for recruiting amongst Canada West schools is \$34,413 and SFU's 2022 recruiting budget was \$30,247. SFU's recruiting budget is higher than four of the six Canada West programs;
- SFU's 2022 training camp expenses of \$67,294 are competitive with Canada West.

This data includes comparisons in the two largest expense categories: 1) Salaries and 2) Travel. The SFU football coaching budget is competitive with most programs in Canada West; however, the high cost of living in the greater Vancouver area suggests that this may require more

¹¹⁴ Note: Based on a confidential 2019 analysis of Canadian university football program budgets. Not adjusted for inflation.

¹¹⁵ Note: Canada West 2019 football budget data adjusted for inflation to provide a comparison with SFU's 2022 football budget. All information provided in this bulleted list is adjusted for inflation.

¹¹⁶ Note: SFU's 2022 football budget was included in the calculation of this median.

investment, especially given the high turnover of SFU football coaches cited as a factor that has limited the program's success and detracted from the student-athlete experience. Moreover, SFU's 2022 commitment to become a living wage employer¹¹⁷ could impact the remuneration of part-time contract assistant coaches who earn markedly less than full-time coaches. Several recent SFU football coaches interviewed by the Special Advisor cited their remuneration as being problematic given the high cost of living. Contemplating increases to salaries is not a football-only decision as this will have implications across the Department and must conform to SFU's human resources policies.

Competing in Canada West suggests that SFU football could enjoy annual savings in their regular season travel budget of more than \$60,000 based on 2022 actuals in the SFU budget; this analysis takes into account regular season travel budgets in Canada West as well as a 1:1 benchmarking comparison with the regular season travel budget of UBC football. Some of these savings could be redistributed into other areas of the SFU football budget. SFU has not budgeted for exhibition and playoff travel and this must be factored into a pro-forma budget in anticipation of greater playoff success as a member of Canada West. Some football programs in Canada West do not budget for playoff travel in their operating budget and have access to specially earmarked funding for this purpose from the central university budget. Playoff travel is difficult to predict, and advancing to the playoffs has reputational benefits for universities which is why some universities support and reward success through this funding arrangement.

Although SFU football's recruiting budget is competitive with Canada West, additional investments in this area will be necessary if SFU joins Canada West. A depleted SFU football roster means the return of SFU football will be akin to a new program start-up, thus requiring additional resources to compete for talented recruits to re-stock the program.

¹¹⁷ SFU, "SFU announces move to become living wage employer - a first for a Canadian public university." Online: <https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2022/07/sfu-announces-move-to-become-living-wage-employer.html> [Last Accessed: 11 August 2023].

Football Scholarships

Athletic scholarships are critical to SFU football's ability to recruit top student-athletes — and will remain so — if the team competes in Canada West and U SPORTS. Interestingly, the opportunity to offer athletic scholarships was one reason that factored into SFU's decision to join the NAIA upon the University's founding. At the time, Canadian universities did not offer athletic scholarships, thus it was viewed as a differentiator for SFU athletics according to several individuals. Times have changed and U SPORTS has an Athletic Financial Awards ('AFA')¹¹⁸ Policy that allows member institutions to offer financial support to student-athletes in Canada.

According to an Affidavit by SFU's Senior Director, Athletics and Recreation, athletics financial aid provided by SFU included the following information:

- “35. In 2022-23, SFU's GIA (individual) limit for domestic students was \$19,533. For international students, it was \$40,062.
36. In football, the NCAA Division II Bylaws limit the maximum amount of money an academic institution can grant to student-athletes on the team to the equivalent of 36 full GIA scholarships.
37. For the 2022-23 season, the University's maximum scholarship limit was \$703,188, based on the equivalency of 36 domestic GIA scholarships.
38. For the 2022-23 season, the University provided financial aid totaling \$572,649 to athletes in its football program. The Head Coach allocated scholarships to 67 student-athletes totaling \$438,250. Individual scholarships ranged from \$500 to \$15,000.”¹¹⁹

SFU football is disadvantaged in the NCAA DII as it concerns athletic scholarships and this is frequently cited as one reason why the team has been uncompetitive in the United States. The remaining discussion in this section focuses on the complexities and nuances of the U SPORTS AFA Policy that must be considered, and a preliminary assessment of how the \$438,250 in scholarship funding would compare against universities in Canada.

¹¹⁸ Note: In U SPORTS, the term 'Athletic Financial Awards' ('AFAs') refers to what is typically known as 'Athletic Scholarships' in the United States.

¹¹⁹ Affidavit #1, Theresa Hanson at paras 35-38.

AFA rules are governed by policies of U SPORTS, respective conferences, as well as the member institution's financial aid policies. The value and number of AFAs varies from conference to conference and from institution to institution, thus there is no single national standard for such awards in Canada. Moreover, certain awards may be subject to specific conditions including academic standing, citizenship, and other factors.

U SPORTS Policy 50.10 is the Athletic Financial Awards Policy (also referred to as the Athletic Scholarship Policy).¹²⁰ According to Article 50.10.3.2, the Athletic Financial Awards ceiling is a calculation of the maximum number of award units available at each institution in each of the sports offered by U SPORTS. These awards units are established using a benchmark of 70% of the Championship Roster for each sport. In football, the Championship Roster is set at 48, thus the award ceiling is 33.6 (versus the equivalent of 36 full scholarships permitted by the NCAA DII). This is further nuanced by related Articles in Policy 50.10; for example, Article 50.10.3.2.2 states that "Student-athletes who have achieved Academic All-Canadian status in the preceding academic year of study will be exempt from counting as part of the awards team complement limits."¹²¹ Thus, every student-athlete on a varsity football team who achieves a minimum academic average of 80% enables the award ceiling of 33.6 to be expanded by one (1). This is a compelling provision that encourages and rewards academic success which is consistent with the *student*-athlete success values espoused by U SPORTS.

There are several provisions in Policy 50.10 that are unclear as to their application to SFU should football be granted an exemption to compete; for example, "Article 50.10.1.5 U SPORTS promotes gender equity in the implementation of the awards policy."¹²² Because SFU football intends to seek membership in U SPORTS without membership in any other varsity sports, the interpretation of this policy requires dialogue between SFU, U SPORTS, and Canada West. This

¹²⁰ U SPORTS, "Policy 50.10 Athletic Financial Awards Policy." Online: https://usports.ca/uploads/hq/By_Laws-Policies-Procedures/2019/EN/Policy_50_Financial_Awards_%282019-2020%29.pdf [Last Accessed: 13 August 2023].

¹²¹ U SPORTS, "Policy 50.10 Athletic Financial Awards Policy." Online: https://usports.ca/uploads/hq/By_Laws-Policies-Procedures/2019/EN/Policy_50_Financial_Awards_%282019-2020%29.pdf [Last Accessed: 13 August 2023].

¹²² Ibid.

Article is but one example of the complex policy differences between U SPORTS and the NCAA that requires further analysis. A feasibility analysis of these policy differences should include the impacts of the U SPORTS and Canada West financial aid policies on the Department and student-athletes who would be competing under two different governing structures — NCAA DII and U SPORTS. This is one of many policy comparisons that must be made to determine financial aid equity considerations between potentially two different classes of student-athletes competing under two different governing regimes.

Canada West Policy #7 governs eligibility and states that “All U SPORTS regulations shall be applicable to the Association,”¹²³ including Athletic Financial Aid. In Canada West, the maximum value of an AFA is capped at the value of tuition and compulsory fees.¹²⁴ Thus, at SFU, this would be capped at approximately \$6,424 tuition plus fees for domestic students¹²⁵ and \$33,046 plus fees for international students.¹²⁶ This differs in many significant ways from “Awards, Benefits, and Expenses for Enrolled Student-Athletes” who are subject to NCAA DII regulations. SFU student-athletes who compete in the NCAA DII have a higher maximum ceiling for athletic scholarships that can also include living expenses.

SFU’s total athletic scholarship contributions to football in the amount of \$438,250 are competitive with other U SPORTS football programs, including \$300,000 in base support provided by the University. In 2017-2018, a total of \$3,726,853 in AFA funding was allocated to 1,019 U SPORTS football student-athletes.¹²⁷ This amounts to an average of \$138,031 for each of the 27 U SPORTS members in the sport of football. Approximately 64% of U SPORTS football players received an AFA in 2017-2018. It is clear that SFU’s current football scholarship funding would go much further in Canada than it does in the United States.

¹²³ Canada West, “Policy #7 — Eligibility.” Online: https://www.canadawest.org/files/opsmanual/07_Eligibility_as_of_August_9_2019.pdf [Last Accessed: 13 August 2023].

¹²⁴ U SPORTS, “Policy 50.10 Athletic Financial Awards Policy.” Online: https://usports.ca/uploads/hq/By_Laws-Policies-Procedures/2019/EN/Policy_50_Financial_Awards_%282019-2020%29.pdf [Last Accessed: 13 August 2023].

¹²⁵ SFU, “Estimated Costs for Domestic Students,” Online: [Domestic students - Financial Aid and Awards - Simon Fraser University \(sfu.ca\)](https://www.sfu.ca/financial-aid/estimated-costs-for-domestic-students) [Last Accessed: 17 August 2023].

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ U SPORTS, 2017-18 AFA Funding Summary By Sport. Undated.

Football Revenue & Funding Models

For the majority of universities in Canada, athletics funding is derived from a combination of sources, most typically led by student ancillary fees, contributions from the university, as well as other forms of revenue generation (e.g. ticket sales) and fundraising. Approximately, 70% of the SFU athletics budget is generated through student fees. Additional funding is provided by SFU and augmented through other fundraising efforts. Ticket sales do not account for significant revenues to many football team budgets and this is typical of many university athletic programs in Canada with a few notable exceptions, including Laval University. In Ottawa, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa enjoy significant annual revenues through the annual Panda Game that “has been sold out for the past five years with attendance at 24,000 (60% of those in attendance are students from the two universities).”¹²⁸

Without mandatory student fee contributions, most university athletic departments in Canada would not be able to function and the same can be said of SFU. This was especially evident during the Covid pandemic when many athletic departments in Canada were forced to operate without this support, including the Department of Athletics and Recreation at SFU. For example, in 2019-20, SFU student fee contributions to the Department were \$5,319,510 which represents 67% of total funding.¹²⁹ In 2020-21, student fee contributions to the Department totaled a mere \$1,958 which represents close to zero percent of the Department’s total funding.

Although student fees are the lifeblood of athletic department funding in Canada, these fees are relatively inelastic given the very small percentage of the student population who participate in varsity athletics combined with many other mandated student fee requirements. Thus, expecting SFU students to solve the Department’s operating budget shortfalls is unlikely to be supported; this can be said of many Canadian universities. Nor can SFU be expected to continue to offset the Department’s structural budget deficit which has recently been made clear by senior officers of

¹²⁸ Carleton University Student Affairs, “Community Information for Panda 2022.” Online: <https://carleton.ca/studentaffairs/panda/#:~:text=The%20game%20has%20been%20sold%20out%20for%20the,in%20attendance%20are%20students%20from%20the%20two%20universities%29> [Last Accessed: 13 August 2023].

¹²⁹ SFU, “2022 Athletics and Recreation Review,” 14 February 2022.

the University. This is an ineffective business practice that has not forced the Department to address the root of its structural budget problems which have been compounding for several years. In 2023, the Department's budget deficit had ballooned to \$1.77M before \$700,000 in budget reduction measures mandated by SFU — leaving a deficit of approximately \$1M before the University's decision to cancel the football program.

Without increases to student fee contributions through the Recreation-Athletics Fee or more funding from the University — both highly unlikely — SFU football must generate incremental self-generated revenue through activities including sponsorship, fundraising events, and donations. It is widely agreed that the Department and football program have not fully developed their capacity in these areas which is an opportunity and a glass half full. This is further supported by the findings of the Deloitte Benchmarking Report including **“self-generated funds (those directly raised by the athletics department) appear lower than SFU's comparators.”**¹³⁰ The \$3M in pledges announced by the SFU Football Alumni Society can go a long way to bridge the amount of incremental funding that the program will need to join U SPORTS and Canada West. Moreover, the strategic allocation of a portion of these funds could be used to assist the Department in further expanding its fundraising capacity; for example, providing funding for additional positions in athletics or football advancement to generate a sustainable funding pipeline.

The crisis over football's cancellation at SFU created a fundraising opportunity that has generated \$3M in pledges, but is this support sustainable? One can look to football operating models at the University of Toronto, Carleton University, the University of Regina, and Laval University for insights. At each of these institutions, external fundraising has played a significant role in the operation of their varsity football programs.

The University of Toronto ('UofT') offers a cautionary tale as it concerns the sustainability of external investments to fully fund its varsity football program. In 1993, the football program was to be eliminated from UofT's varsity programming and it took a rescue bid by an alumni group

¹³⁰ Deloitte Development LLC, “Simon Fraser University Athletics Benchmark and Scan Report,” September 2022.

called the Friends of Varsity Blues Football ('FVBF') to get the program reinstated. UofT agreed to reinstate the program contingent on the program being fully funded by the FVBF, save for two full-time coaching salaries provided by UofT. According to one individual familiar with the history of UofT football, "There is lots of vim and vigor at the start, lots of passion, but when you rely on private sector support, it often doesn't work." FVBF saved the program and successfully funded it for many years until gradually the UofT assumed more and more of the funding obligation, including a university-funded stadium development. Today, the program continues to be supported through alumni sources, however, the majority of the operating budget is provided through university sources. Part of the reason for this shift was philosophical and linked to internal fairness and equity across varsity programs — football needed to be treated like other varsity programs at UofT.

The Carleton University football program started in 1945 but was discontinued by the university in 1998. This prompted an immediate effort by football alumni to reinstate the program, summarized as follows:

"Following the controversial decision in 1999, a group of volunteers led by the Old Crow Society, Carleton's football alumni chapter, spent 'hundreds of hours' lobbying, letter writing, and conducting research to 'Revive the Ravens.' In cooperation with the department of development and alumni services, the group produced a planning-feasibility study in 2000 which identified the potential to raise \$1 million in donations plus an additional \$1 million in other forms of revenue to support a competitive football program. The 12 committee members personally pledged \$165,000 if the sport was reinstated."¹³¹

Despite this effort, Carleton University did not reinstate the football team. According to President Richard Van Loon, an alumnus of the Raven's football program himself, "It did not seem likely that we could sustain an ongoing operation like football through a one-time fundraising effort."¹³² At the time, and similar to SFU, there was not enough money to fund other varsity sports and competitive clubs, and "The goal was to increase participation, create more gender

¹³¹ Carleton University Magazine, "Fall 2002 Memories." Online: https://web.archive.org/web/20070927200440/http://magazine.carleton.ca/2002_fall/814.htm [Last Accessed: 14 August 2023].

¹³² Ibid.

equity among sports, and create a higher rate of success on the field.”¹³³ According to President Van Loon, “At the time it was disbanded, it was taking up a very large part of our athletics budget with not very good results on the field.” This is strikingly similar to SFU football and broader capacity issues within the Department.

In 2008, conversations began about bringing football back to Carleton based on a fully external funding model. In 2010, a fundraising campaign was approved by the Board of Governors and specific conditions were established to reinstate football. These conditions included the following:

- \$5M campaign fundraising goal;
- Business plan for football including stadium, locker room; and,
- Development of a new governance model including an agreement between Carleton University and the Old Crows Alumni Society Inc.

Committees were struck including facilities, governance, and fundraising. These conditions were successfully met and football returned to the OUA and U SPORTS in 2013. With a \$5M reserve and an annual commitment of approximately \$750,000 in external funding for the first several years, football was reborn. None of the team’s funding was provided by the university or from student ancillary fees; football had to be 100% externally funded. The funding model relied most heavily on donations but also included fundraising through camps, sponsorship, as well as ticket sales. After ten years, there has recently been some waning support that has forced the program to reduce expenses and accelerate Department-led fundraising to make up for the drop-off in donations. This includes a \$1M matching gift program launched by Carleton University to kickstart a \$5M operating endowment. The football team continues to operate without relying on student ancillary fees or university funding.

Like Carleton, the Laval model relies exclusively on private support to fund its football program. Football is described by a former senior athletics staff member as “the main engine in the train”

¹³³ Carleton University Magazine, “Fall 2002 Memories.” Online: https://web.archive.org/web/20070927200440/http://magazine.carleton.ca/2002_fall/814.htm [Last Accessed: 14 August 2023].

and a program that is equivalent to five or six basketball teams. Football was launched in 1996 and quickly became one of the most successful programs in Canada including 11 Vanier Cup National Championships. Laval's funding model is "one of a kind" and has not been replicated despite attempts by some universities to do so, according to a former Laval staff member. Like other varsity teams at Laval, football operates as a non-profit organization, led by prominent Quebec business leader and philanthropist Jacques Tanguay, M.C., who acts as President. Mr. Tanguay has financially supported and championed Laval football from its inception and is the driving force behind the program's success.

Business and community interests are the principal drivers of the success of the Laval model. What sets Laval apart from other programs and what makes it one of a kind is the significant revenues earned through ticket sales that are unmatched in Canada. Furthermore, Laval's success in selling out its games allows the program to deliver bona-fide marketing and sponsorship benefits to attract investment from the business community. This has proven to be a reliable and sustainable revenue source for the program.

Finally, the University of Regina ('UofR') offers a unique example of a privatized model that has evolved over the past 24 years. In 1999, the Regina Rams football team became a member of Canada West and U SPORTS after a 45-year history of operating in the Canadian Junior Football League ('CJFL'). After achieving much success in the CJFL, the Regina Rams Football Club (the 'Club') approached the UofR with a proposal to compete under the auspices of the university, but with complete operational control and funding maintained by the Club which operates as a non-profit organization. The Club also retained ownership of the team and its trademarks including the name 'Rams'; all other varsity teams at the UofR compete under the nickname 'Cougars' which has been a source of frustration to some university stakeholders.

As the relationship between the Club and the university matured, the UofR assumed more accountability and responsibility for its operation. The university recognized that it was not prudent to have certain aspects of the operation controlled by a third-party organization, particularly as it related to staffing and student-athletes. This evolution caused some friction

between representatives of the Club and the university according to one individual familiar with the history. As the relationship matured and costs to operate the team increased, the university assumed a portion of the team's funding including responsibility for full-time coaching salaries and Athletic Financial Awards, among other costs. Today, the UofR funds approximately half of the total budget to operate the program from a combination of student ancillary fees and central university funding. The Saskatchewan Roughriders contribute approximately \$500,000 annually to the team through their charitable foundation. The Regina Rams continue to operate with a Board of Directors which now includes the Dean and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health as well as the Director of Athletics who serves on the Executive Committee.

Some of the limitations of a fully funded private model drawn from these examples include the following:

- Concentration of donations from a small number of individuals is a source of risk;
- Lack of funding sustainability over time;
- Loss of enthusiasm and interest from donors over time;
- Lack of control in the operation of the football program which also is a source of risk to the university;
- Lack of equity across varsity programs in how these programs are funded and supported can negatively impact culture within a department of athletics. For example, one of the aforementioned models fostered a "cultural divide between student-athletes and between coaches in the department;"
- Lack of support from students and the university is not a collaborative approach; programs are run like businesses and may not be fully aligned with broader student service objectives, values, and university policies.

A collaborative funding model that relies on multiple revenue sources offers the most sustainable approach for SFU football and avoids the risks associated with a fully privatized model. Base funding through SFU including student ancillary fees can be augmented through private donations and more aggressive fundraising targets including sponsorship and other forms of business development. This will ensure a well-balanced source of funding rather than putting 'all your eggs in one basket.'

Investments to Operate SFU Football in U SPORTS

The following table provides an assessment of the type of new incremental investments and support required to operate a football team in Canada West and U SPORTS based on the discussion and analysis provided herein. Where known, associated dollar amounts are provided¹³⁴; otherwise, amounts must be determined by the Department according to its operating procedures and norms (i.e. salary grids, advancement fundraising costs, etc.). It is important to note that several of these investments will also have Department-wide implications on other varsity sports in the Department.

Summary of New SFU Football Investments by Type

* denotes an investment that has Department-wide implications beyond football.

Investment Type	Category(ies)	\$ Amount	Comments/Rationale
1. One FT position to manage U SPORTS compliance, reporting, and other FB team management or support functions	- FT Staffing - SA Support	SFU determination	- Operating under two governance regimes requires a dedicated 'hybrid' position for FB to manage compliance and other FB management and team liaison functions as determined by the Department.
2. One dedicated FT position to lead FB advancement and other business development functions	- FT Staffing	SFU determination	- A dedicated position to ensure that new fundraising targets are met is critical to sustaining FB. - Vital position to develop and service an expanded number of alumni and community donors and to support FB alumni and other fundraising events. - Current athletics advancement position is 50% cost-shared with SFU Advancement. - Additional advancement costs must be calculated (\$.25 per \$1.00 raised). - Key liaison with SFU Football Alumni Society.
3. Coaching*	- FT & PT Staffing	Increase total annual amount by \$47,000 +	- Increase will align SFU with Canada West football average. - High cost of living in Vancouver. - Supports the need for greater coaching continuity – cited as a

¹³⁴ Budget amounts provided are estimates only and may be subject to change.

			<p>limiting factor to program competitiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires internal Department review according to HR procedures and Department-wide implications on other varsity sports.
4. Athletic Therapy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PT/Contract Staffing - SA Support 	SFU determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many staff and student-athletes reported that therapy resources were under capacity when football was operating. This requires a Department-wide assessment of the number and type of therapy positions by varsity sport to determine the budget impact to FB. - Consult recommended guidelines of the National Athletic Trainers' Association ('NATA').
5. Academic Support/Tutoring*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PT/Contract Staffing - SA Support 	SFU determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many players on the FB team expressed concern over recent cutbacks. - Vital to support the Department's goal to "win" in the classroom as part of the student-athlete success objective. - This requires a Department-wide assessment as this need goes beyond FB.
6. Mental Health Support*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PT/Contract Staffing - SA Support 	SFU determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Department recently had a contract social worker on staff but the contract was not renewed. - This is an area of need raised by students and staff that has Department-wide budget implications.
7. Player Per Diems*	- SA Support	Increase player per diems using SFU policy as a guide to the maximum allowable according to the U SPORTS Travel Policy (\$55/day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of proper nutrition and low per diems are not conducive to a high-performance environment. Current student-athlete per diems are 163% below what SFU employees are entitled to receive based on U.S. travel. - Current SA per-diem is \$36/day (\$8 bkfst), \$10 lunch, \$18 dinner). - SFU policy¹³⁵ for employees is \$75/day (\$20/\$20/\$35) – Canada travel.

¹³⁵ SFU, "Business & Travel Expense (BTE) Procedures," 1 July 2022 (Revision Date). Online: [https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/administrative_policies/3_series/2022-07-01%20AD%203.02%20Procedures%20and%20Rates%20\(rev%2007-2022\).pdf](https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/administrative_policies/3_series/2022-07-01%20AD%203.02%20Procedures%20and%20Rates%20(rev%2007-2022).pdf) [Last Accessed: 1 July 2023].

			- SFU policy for employees is \$95/day (\$25/\$25/\$45) – International travel. ¹³⁶
8. Recruiting	- Operations	Increase annual amount by a minimum of \$10,000 +	- Current recruiting budget is competitive with most other Canada West programs; however, reinstating FB in a new league with few players remaining requires additional investment in this area.
9. Equipment	- SA Support	Requires assessment by the Department	- Football equipment needs cited by players. - Unsafe and expired equipment poses a health and safety risk to athletes and other risks to SFU.
10. Facilities - Replace and Expand Turf Field*	- Facilities - SA Support	- Requires SFU facility assessment - Requires Request for Proposal ('RFP') process	- Current turf needs replacement and is cited as a risk by student-athletes. - Dimensions of turf need to be expanded to accommodate Canadian football rules and this will add significant expenses if the track needs to be moved or removed.
11. Facilities - Expand Capacity of SFU Sports Medicine Clinic*	- Facilities - SA Support	- Unknown	- The existing clinic has “run out of space.” - Existing clinic (10 beds) was designed to service 200-250 athletes. Total number of athletes with football is 388.
12. Travel Subsidy - Canada West	- Operations	Unknown. Must be explored and negotiated through the application process	- SFU’s participation in Canada West will impose additional travel costs on current members and subsidizing this increase could be a condition of membership acceptance. - This could be offset through additional fundraising and perhaps the involvement of the CFL and its clubs.
13. U SPORTS Application Fees	- Operations	\$55,000	- Mandatory one-time fees.
14. Canada West Application Fees	- Operations	\$313,000	- Mandatory one-time fees.
15. U SPORTS Annual Membership Fees	- Operations	\$16,481	- Mandatory annual fees.
16. Canada West Annual Membership Fees	- Operations	\$21,000	- Mandatory annual fees.

¹³⁶ Note: For competition in U SPORTS, the value of per diems or meals cannot exceed the amount prescribed within U SPORTS Travel Policy (\$55/day).

Through the Football Student-Athlete Survey, players on the team were asked for their feedback about investments that are required to operate a competitive and sustainable football program at SFU. These are valuable insights from those who have lived the experience of playing football at SFU. The following themes emerged:

League Options

“We need a place to play, and we need our conference contracts to protect us. The fact that they (administration) let the majority of our home games turn into ‘neutral’ games is unacceptable.”

Staffing

“I think it is necessary for a team manager to be employed. Someone to act as a liaison between the administration and the coaches, but part of the football staff. In my opinion, the coaches should be focused on coaching the team, recruiting, and game planning. Administrative responsibilities have been pushed onto the coaching staff, creating an unsustainable workload for them.”

“I think a team manager would be perfect for addressing many of these issues.”

“The coaching turnover from 2019-Present has been, in my eyes, unacceptable and concerning. Invest in coaching and the program to make it attractive for them to stay.”

Academic Assistance

“More direct tutoring and academic help (with study hall hours and locations preferably).”

“As a Student-athlete I would like to see more resources made available to myself and my peers in regards to academic help and support. It often felt that the burden of balancing the student-athlete life at SFU (which is a very academically rigorous school) fell on us as individuals or some select teammates who were burdened with the management of our academics. Whilst I understand that our grades are our responsibility, it is something that is extremely difficult to manage on your own, especially with the amount of travel that athletes at this school face. We sometimes would have to leave on a Thursday afternoon and not return until Sunday night. Missing class and opportunities to study and do homework.”

“...most importantly having excellent academic support in place for the student-athletes to be successful. I've been told we get 5 hours of academic support per semester which seems way too low. I have friends at other universities who get a lot more academic support. U of A has

an awesome program in place for their players. SFU could learn something from discussions with them.”

“Required academic advising appointments for players to help them balance academics and football, including for new recruits and their first semester planning. Also, perhaps mid-term check in's and required course planning to be eligible to play so there are less players ‘falling through the cracks’.”

Nutrition

“We have had people on the team travelling to food banks to get meals.”

“A better and more sustainable food program that allows the less fortunate on our team and ideally the whole team a chance to get the nutrition a young student-athlete needs to succeed.”

“I was part of the group that physically starved on road trips because our dinner surplus couldn't support a full meal.”

“Nutritional help: we should find a way to team up with our strength and conditioning dept. to put in place a system that would provide help based on individual needs...”

“A better meal plan for Fall camp so we don't have to starve for 2 weeks when the football program stops feeding us and the dining hall is closed till classes start.”

Financial Assistance (Scholarships)

“Higher scholarships due to how expensive SFU is.”

“Scholarship budget increase: most of the guys can barely afford to be here and we can't recruit the kind of players we need with the current budget.”

“The biggest thing that needs improvement is the funding for scholarships. Some players are on scholarship as low as \$500. And the highest international scholarship is 15,000 which is only half of the international tuition.”

“FULLY FUND THE SCHOLARSHIPS TO THE MAXIMUM LIMIT OF 36.”

Equipment and Facilities

“There should be plans in place when equipment needs to be replaced.”

“We had players using ‘speeds’ which are around 15-year-old helmets which is way below industry safety.”

“I would like to see more support in our physical care and this would come in the form of funding from the school to provide more of the basics needed to compete in football. Like knee braces for athletes, new helmets, newer pads and the support pads that go with them (like back plates), and if possible cleats.”

“The turf needs to be redone. This is not a football-specific issue, but it is a necessity for the University.”

Mental Health Supports

“An environment that helps all student-athletes maintain positive wellbeing. An environment that allows everyone to thrive physically but most importantly mentally.”

“A sports psychologist that is hands-on with all the teams.”

Strength and Conditioning

“A personal strength and conditioning coach for the team.”

Recruiting

“I just feel that proper recruiting is what makes a program great. We need to have the funding available to land recruits...”

Connections to the Community

“SFU as a whole needs to be connected with the local people participating in volunteering. Groups of us have tried to before but we need a higher up to support us...”

“I think that the schools need to start putting more effort into changing the school's sports culture. It's embarrassing to the coaches and players when the stands are empty or only full of parents.”

“I am from the States and to see how sports culture as a whole up here gets treated is really sad. The same love and passion for the game just doesn’t seem to be there, but I think it could work. Y’all just need to put some more money into it and get the communities involved.”

It is evident that the deficiencies noted by players on the SFU football team are related to the low student-athlete experience ratings that emerged from the survey. Some of the issues raised by football players may also be experienced by student-athletes on other varsity teams and requires further assessment by the Department. This assessment should examine the relationship between these expressed deficiencies and SFU’s strategic mandate to “Champion the Student-Athlete Experience” and the objective to “Plan for student-athletes to win in the classroom, in competition & in the community.” The initiatives associated with this objective are to: 1) Support and inspire academic success; 2) Elevate athletic performance; and, 3) Facilitate student-athlete well-being & personal development.¹³⁷ This objective has not been met as it relates to the experience of student-athletes on the SFU football team.

¹³⁷ SFU, “Unleashing Our Potential: A Strategic Plan for SFU Athletics & Recreation 2016-2021,” undated.

Chapter 4: Varsity Football Impacts

4.1 Introduction

The impacts of the decision to end the football program at SFU have had wide-ranging impacts on student-athletes, staff, and the broader SFU community which are summarized in this chapter and are addressed throughout this Report. The decision has been intensely polarizing including those who support reinstatement of the football team and others who support the University's decision to end the program.

Student-athletes and staff on the football team have felt the most immediate impacts of the decision, as well as many staff in the Department who became the targets of harassment, although they had no role or knowledge about the decision. The decision also has affected the student-athlete community more broadly and caused divisions in the Department, as well as a reputational crisis for SFU.

This chapter also identifies several impacts associated with the potential reinstatement of football that SFU must take into consideration.

4.2 Impacts on Football Student-Athletes and Coaches

The impacts of SFU's decision to end varsity football have been felt most acutely by student-athletes and coaches on the football team, including loss of employment by the latter. These impacts are well documented in the affidavits filed in the legal proceedings associated with *Kremler v. Simon Fraser University* and have been further communicated to the Special Advisor through the consultation process. The sudden timing of the decision to end football further exacerbated these impacts and led many players to seek opportunities to play elsewhere through the NCAA transfer portal, and in other leagues including U SPORTS.

The uncertainty and timing associated with the loss of the football program has been stressful for student-athletes on the team and their families. This is reflected in the following comments provided by the “SFU Mom Squad” — a group of mothers of football players on the team:

“Given the abrupt and unexpected nature of the cancellation of SFU football and the timing, which coincided with the last week of classes, final projects/assignments, and final exams, these student-athletes have been purely in survival mode. As such, they have had little time to process immediate concerns including summer jobs, return home for students who live outside the Lower Mainland, etc. For many of them, having to find a suitable situation that can accommodate both their academic and athletic goals for this September is almost impossible given the number of considerations. These include course transfers, finding new accommodations, scholarship opportunities at new schools, and open roster spots for football to name a few.”¹³⁸

These comments are consistent with direct feedback from student-athletes on the team, including survey responses provided by 50 players — summarized in Appendix B: ‘Football Student-Athlete Survey Results.’ These impacts include the loss of athletic identity and community that comes with participating on a varsity team. This was reflected in many comments from players on the team including the following:

“What has made this experience somewhat good for me were the brothers and relationships built on the way. The community built by athletics is special and has benefited my life greatly. Throughout it all, the people going through it with me made it special...”

To mitigate some of these impacts, SFU made several supports available to student-athletes on the team. The following assurances were made by SFU to student-athletes on the football team who were considering continuing their studies at SFU:

“The following academic, athletic and financial commitments will remain available to you for the upcoming 2023-24 academic year through to the completion of your bachelor’s degree (maximum 130 credit hours)... If you are considering playing football at another institution but completing your degree at SFU, please speak to your NCAA Academic Advisors to discuss options including the potential of a letter of permission to take courses at another institution.”¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Email Correspondence to the Special Advisor, 12 May 2023.

¹³⁹ SFU, “Football Student-Athlete Updated Information and Resources,” 3 May 2023.

Academic supports include priority enrollment for the duration of a student's bachelor's degree and tutoring for up to five hours per fall and spring term, among other supports. Access was also provided to the varsity weight room and the football locker room, as well as access to strength and conditioning programs. SFU also agreed to "honour signed athletic financial aid agreements for the duration of your bachelor's degree (maximum 130 credit hours), provided you continue to meet the eligibility and renewal requirements."¹⁴⁰ Additional support was provided to student-athletes who were considering a transfer to another NCAA or non-NCAA school (U SPORTS or NAIA), as well as mental health and well-being supports and resources.

4.3 Impacts on Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff

There have been significant impacts on staff in the Department which are summarized in Appendix C: 'Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff Survey.' Staff were asked to "describe impacts that you have experienced since the varsity football program was terminated on April 4" and the following key themes emerged:

- Staff Harassment and Decreased Morale
- Lack of Communication and Transparency
- Student-Athlete Recognition Impacts
- Misinformation

Although staff in the Department were not involved in the decision to terminate the football program, many reported being harassed, including "Personal verbal attacks and bullying." Some staff reported being so concerned about this behavior that they chose not to wear any SFU-branded clothing in public. According to one staff member, "This experience has turned coach against coach, student-athlete against student-athlete, and forced everyone to pick a side." This has resulted in "Athletic department morale at an all-time low."

The lack of communication and transparency regarding the football decision has left many staff feeling marginalized and this is another factor that has fueled the low morale in the Department. For

¹⁴⁰ SFU, "Football Student-Athlete Updated Information and Resources," 3 May 2023.

example, one staff member commented that “We are the stakeholders and our participation in discussing and problem-solving this has been ignored.” Staff reported being inundated with information requests and angry emails — “with no playbook on what we should be saying or communicating.”

The harassment also extended to social media posts made by staff to celebrate student-athlete and team accomplishments in other varsity sports. For example, “The entire department has had to limit their posts on social media in fear of the backlash being faced online. Records were broken this year in multiple sports, championships won, and still we could not celebrate those successes to the extent they deserved.” The screenshots below¹⁴¹ illustrate this social media backlash. The originating posts are from SFU staff members celebrating the accomplishments of SFU teams.



In addition to social media backlash that constrained the ability to celebrate the accomplishments of SFU’s varsity teams, events including the annual Athletics Gala were cancelled, further impacting the experience of the broader SFU student-athlete community.

¹⁴¹ Identities have been redacted to protect the anonymity of SFU staff.

4.4 SFU Student Community Feedback

The SFU student-athlete community is represented by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee ('SAAC'). The SAAC is comprised of SFU varsity student-athletes whose mission is “to enhance the student-athlete experience through social and academic opportunities, ensuring student-athlete prosperity through effective communication between the athletic body and the administration, and fostering a positive student-athlete image within our community.”¹⁴² The Special Advisor interviewed three executive members of the SAAC which included representatives of football, volleyball, and women’s basketball. The SAAC executives were supportive of their football peer student-athletes and also provided feedback that non-football varsity athletes prefer to remain in the NCAA DII.

On 24 April 2023, an open letter from a coalition of student organizations was sent to senior officers of SFU including President Johnson. The letter was “An Urgent Call to Reinstate the SFU Football Program” and was signed by representatives of the following student organizations and other non-student organizations:

- The Simon Fraser Student Society ('SFSS');
- The SFU Students of Caribbean and African Ancestry ('SFU SOCA');
- Simon Fraser Public Interest Group ('SFPRIG');
- Mom Squad for SFU Football;
- Atira Woman’s Resource Society; and
- SFU Residence Hall Association ('SFU RHA').

The letter also lists the names of 280 individuals including community members¹⁴³, SFU alumni, and SFU students, among others. The letter expresses concern about the decision to terminate the SFU football program and raises the following additional concerns:

“There is an urgency to develop and preserve sports programs that harbour equitable inclusion, the enablement of personal growth and the removal of structural, and financial barriers to access higher education. We believe that the administrative bodies of Simon Fraser University (SFU) must do more to uphold the widespread movement calling for the preservation of not

¹⁴² SFU, “Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.” Online: https://athletics.sfu.ca/sports/2018/12/4/GEN_0921124358.aspx?id=276 [Last Accessed: 29 August 2023].

¹⁴³ Note: The letter defines community member as a family member or person non-affiliated with SFU.

only the SFU football program but the institution’s core values and the democratic processes they’ve committed to upholding.”¹⁴⁴

The letter raises specific concerns about decision-making against EDI and the concomitant impacts on marginalized groups, and claims that “the decision to terminate SFU Football goes against the university’s commitment to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (‘EDI’) policy.”¹⁴⁵ The letter notes that “SFU Football is one of the most diverse groups on campus” and claims that the decision to end the program “contradicts the values we hold as a university and violates EDI-centred Charters SFU has signed...”¹⁴⁶

The student letter also draws attention to the lack of consultation with SFU student groups and highlights the Simon Fraser Student Society’s investment of \$10M in the stadium project. The letter states “...we are concerned about the lack of consultation with athletes and the SFSS as a major stakeholder who’ve created a space for SFU’s community of fans to engage in games and for the Football team to excel within their sport — we are concerned about the deep lack of consultation.”¹⁴⁷ The letter suggests that the loss of football “can have overall negative campus life experiences for students and for the community.”¹⁴⁸

The letter may not be representative of the broader SFU student community, especially as it concerns support for the reinstatement of football. Members of the SAAC voted to not co-sign the letter, making it clear that the letter does not represent the views of the broader student-athlete community.

¹⁴⁴ Letter, “An Urgent Call to Reinstatement of the SFU Football Program — Open Letter from a Coalition of Student Organizations,” 24 April 2023.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

4.5 Football Community Impacts

The loss of football at SFU is a blow to the football ecosystem in British Columbia and Canada according to many football stakeholders who were interviewed including SFU football alumni, local football organizations, and national organizations including the CFL and Football Canada. The B.C. Lions, who have seen a resurgence of community interest and fan engagement under the ownership of Mr. Amar Doman, issued the following statement in support of the program:

“The BC Lions are deeply saddened and disappointed to hear the news about Simon Fraser University’s football program. Today’s news impacts several dedicated individuals, in particular the student-athletes, coaches, staff, countless volunteers, parents and, of course, alumni, who tirelessly dedicated themselves to the SFU program. The long and rich history included a very proud chapter that highlights its bond with our team and league. Lui Passaglia, Rick Klassen, Nick Hebler, Glen Jackson, Sean Millington and Angus Reid are just a few of the greats who came through SFU, building a tradition that continues today with current Lions Michael Couture and Jordan Herdman-Reed. The BC Lions will continue to do everything we can to support amateur football at all levels in this province.”¹⁴⁹

Some of “the greats who came through SFU” have disavowed their relationship with SFU including Lui Passaglia who asked to be removed from SFU's Sports Hall of Fame in response to the University's decision. The decision to end the football program has alienated many in the SFU football alumni community of more than 710 individuals which represents 18% of the total population of SFU athletics alumni. Alumni can be important champions and brand ambassadors for their alma mater and SFU risks losing the support of a significant number of athletics alumni should the program not be reinstated.

The Special Advisor spoke to many impassioned SFU football alumni who are active in the local amateur football community as teachers, coaches, and volunteers. These alumni expressed concern about the long-term impacts of the SFU program’s demise on amateur football in the province as the pipeline of SFU alumni and student-athlete volunteers and coaches dries up over time. One football

¹⁴⁹ B.C. Lions, “Lions Statement on SFU Football,” 4 April 2023. Online: <https://www.bclions.com/2023/04/04/lions-statement-on-sfu-football/> [Last Accessed: 30 August 2023].

alumnus suggested that there has not been a mandate to connect alumni to the community and this represents a lost opportunity should football not be reinstated. Another football alumnus who coaches local high school football stated that “We have a great opportunity here. It’s not often you get a re-set button. This is an opportunity to build something special that everyone can be proud of.”

The CFL and Football Canada are concerned about losing SFU football which provides almost 100 roster spots for players and represents one of only two university programs in the province of British Columbia. The SFU program also plays a key role in the high-performance pathway for football including many players who have gone on to notable careers in the CFL as alluded to in the B.C. Lions’ statement. The Canadian Football League Players Association (‘CFLPA’) also was consulted and believe that “It would be better for the Canadian football ecosystem if SFU competed in Canada West and U SPORTS.” The opportunity for SFU football to compete in Canada is seen as an opportunity to build football both locally and nationally, including the development of rivalry games with UBC and others that can be leveraged to develop greater interest in the SFU program, as well as positive reinforcement of SFU’s brand in the community.

The CFL’s interest in supporting the reinstatement of SFU football is obvious and understandable. Losing a university football program in Canada is not beneficial to the league and some individuals have expressed concerns that not reinstating football at SFU could make it easier for some other struggling university football programs to follow suit but this is merely a hypothesis that has not been tested.

Many CFL clubs provide various levels of support to universities in their home communities which underscores the importance of these university programs to the livelihood of the CFL and its clubs. For example, the Saskatchewan Roughriders contribute approximately \$500,000 each year to the Regina Rams, as well as support to other universities and amateur football organizations in the province of Saskatchewan. One of the potential barriers associated with SFU joining Canada West is the increased travel costs this would impose on Canada West football teams; some individuals have suggested that this presents an opportunity for the CFL and its western clubs to be part of the solution through the development of a travel pool fund that could support these incremental costs. Football

Canada also sees the potential of flag football, including growing interest in women’s flag football, as an opportunity to further grow the sport in Canada, including on university campuses.

4.6 Impacts Associated with the Reinstatement of Football

In weighing the decision of whether or not to reinstate varsity football, SFU must consider a variety of other factors that have emerged through the consultation process. As noted in the Executive Summary, this is not just a football issue to be solved and SFU must consider the impacts of reinstating football on the Department and University more broadly. Several of these factors have been introduced throughout this Report and are summarized in the table below.

Impacts to Consider	Description	Internal Report References
1. Department Finances	- The Department has a structural deficit that exceeds \$1M with football being reinstated.	- p.6 Financial Motives - p.18 Organizational Structure - p.38 Finances and Capacity. - p.48 Football Budget Analysis
2. Incremental Costs to Compete in U SPORTS	- The base football budget of approximately \$1M ¹⁵⁰ will need to be augmented with several incremental costs to accommodate participation in U SPORTS while the remainder of the varsity teams continue to participate in NCAA DII. - This includes additional staffing costs, student-athlete support costs, and facility costs.	- p.80 Benchmarking SFU Football Finances - p.93 Investments to Operate SFU Football in U SPORTS
3. Application Fees to Canada West and U SPORTS	- Application fees for Canada West are \$313,000 - Application fees for U SPORTS are \$55,000	- p.62 U SPORTS Fees - p.69 Canada West Fees
4. Turf Replacement and Reconfiguration	- Participation in Canada West and U SPORTS requires a field with Canadian football dimensions. - The current turf field is past its lifespan and has been cited as a safety issue by student-athletes.	- p.93 Summary of New Investments by Type

¹⁵⁰ Note: The 2022 football budget was \$1,056,797 excluding one-time fundraising transfers.

	- Expanding the size of the field may require removal or reconfiguration of the track which has a direct impact on SFU varsity track and field.	
5. Student-Athlete Equity Considerations	- Concerns have been raised about the potential of fostering two different classes of student-athletes at SFU who would be subject to different rules and opportunities in two different governing bodies. - This could be a source of division in the Department.	- p.34 Suggested KPIs for Varsity Program Assessment - p.84 Football Scholarships - p.104 SFU Student Community Feedback
6. Branding	- SFU must assess the implications of football competing in U SPORTS as it relates to the brand “Canada’s NCAA Team.”	- p.29 Canada’s NCAA Team
7. SFU Football Alumni Fundraising	- SFU Football Alumni have confirmed \$3M in pledges over five years that can be used to offset certain incremental costs and to provide strategic investments in other areas (e.g. fundraising staffing) to increase fundraising capacity for the football program and Department.	- p.64 U SPORTS Conditions of Membership - p.66 Membership Rules —Canada West
8. Coalition of Student Support	- A coalition of SFU student organizations strongly supports the reinstatement of football. - Will this coalition advocate for an increase in the Recreation-Athletics student fee to address the structural budget issues and “an urgency to develop and preserve sports programs...” - Is the coalition and their views representative of the broader cohort of SFU students?	- p.104 SFU Student Community Feedback

Appendix A: Memorandum: Evaluate Support for Competitive Exhibition Games in 2023



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Memorandum

To: SFU Executive
From: Bob Copeland, Special Advisor
Date: 9 June 2023
Re: Evaluate Support for Competitive Exhibition Games in 2023

The following information is provided to assist SFU in decision-making concerning the feasibility of providing some form of competitive but reduced opportunities than a full-scale program, including the possibility of “controlled scrimmages”¹⁵¹ in 2023. This information reflects our discussion and agreement yesterday that it does not appear to be feasible to stage either exhibition games or controlled scrimmages in 2023. This opinion also incorporates feedback from relevant leadership in the Department of Athletics.

The inputs to this feasibility analysis are summarized below:

1. 2023 Exhibition Schedule Proposed by SFU Football Alumni Society

Prior to the legal ruling on the Injunction, the Football Alumni Society proposed to the University a 17-week (10+ games) schedule of exhibition games commencing with a pre-season joint practice with UBC and culminating with the Shrum Bowl versus UBC on December 2. This schedule required lengthy travel including proposed games versus two schools in Ontario and two in Quebec. SFU senior administration was unresponsive of the proposed schedule; it was considered impractical and not in the best interest of football players as student-athletes. The ambitious proposal did not consider the significant travel costs and demands that would be placed on both student-athletes and support staff within the Department (medical, therapy, etc.). Furthermore, some players expressed concerns generally about the impact of travel demands on their academic requirements in a recent survey implemented by the Special Advisor. There was also lingering uncertainty about the status of the football program at this time prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor.

¹⁵¹ A “controlled scrimmage” is a format that rests between a practice and a game. Coaches from both teams are typically on the field and lead joint drills between two teams. As well, this culminates in a controlled game with officials, as well as coaches on the field.

2. Local Exhibition Games or Controlled Scrimmages

The Special Advisor immediately turned his attention to gauging the opportunity for exhibition games or scrimmages within the Province of British Columbia. At the time of this work by the Special Advisor, it was unknown how many of the football student-athletes were planning to return given the ongoing uncertainty. The University was receptive to this concept as it was more practical and student-centred. Furthermore, it would allow local promotion of football within the Province. UBC was contacted and indicated they could accommodate a controlled scrimmage on August 18-19-20 (following the UBC football team's training camp in Vernon). This was described as the only window. The format of a controlled scrimmage was the preferred option for health and safety reasons. UBC expressed concerns about the competitiveness of the SFU team given their inactivity and well as uncertainty regarding player numbers. This could pose risks of injury versus the UBC team that was training 6 days/week compared to a dormant SFU program. The Special Advisor agrees.

The feasibility of the Shrum Bowl game also was discussed. UBC officials said this had very little chance of happening. The Shrum Bowl has become a marquee game between UBC and SFU; the uncertainty surrounding the SFU program, combined with the lead time necessary to promote the event ruled it out as being feasible.

Beyond UBC, there is no opportunity for controlled scrimmages versus other Canada West teams due to the balanced nature of the Canada West schedule. The only common bye week is Thanksgiving weekend, and teams would be reluctant to schedule any such scrimmages during a week of preparation for their league games.

The Special Advisor contacted the B.C. Football Conference of the Canadian Junior Football League ("CJFL") to explore opportunities. The CJFL is comprised of 18-23-year-old players and offers a similar level of competition to university football programs. The B.C. Conference includes teams from Okanagan, Westshore, Chilliwack Valley, Langley, Kamloops, Vancouver Island, and Prince George. Because the B.C. Conference has an unbalanced 7-team schedule, each team has a bye week throughout the season. The Special Advisor inquired if teams would support playing SFU football in controlled scrimmages on their bye week. Including UBC's commitment to play, the target was to examine the potential for a total of 6 games.

The B.C. Football Conference consulted with their teams and provided the following response:

"Hi Bob, thanks for the email. I spoke with our Conference this evening, and the feeling was anything they could participate in from a timing perspective would have to happen before or after our season. Our teams only have 2 byes, and they are used to get players healthy, rest, and a mental break..."

– 6 June 2023

The B.C. Conference's schedule begins in July and ends in October, making it impractical to put together a meaningful number of games with any continuity in scheduling. Scheduling competitions in mid-July is not feasible; this would require an SFU training camp to open near the beginning of July, including having

a full coaching staff hired, and all support staff and baseline testing in place. The possibility of two or three scrimmages in late October would not provide a consistent or enriching experience for players.

3. Returning Football Student-Athletes

On 5 June the Special Advisor was informed by a staff lead in the Department of Athletics that approximately 45 players intended to return to SFU. This includes 5 who are not academically eligible, 1 who has withdrawn, 8 in the NCAA transfer portal, and 5 who have been identified as inquiring about U SPORTS transfers. It excludes 10 incoming recruits. Typical U SPORTS programs have 100-125 players who attend training camp, and practice numbers in some cases that can approach 65-80 players during the season. These large numbers are important to manage the physical demands of the sport including attrition throughout the season due to injuries and other factors.

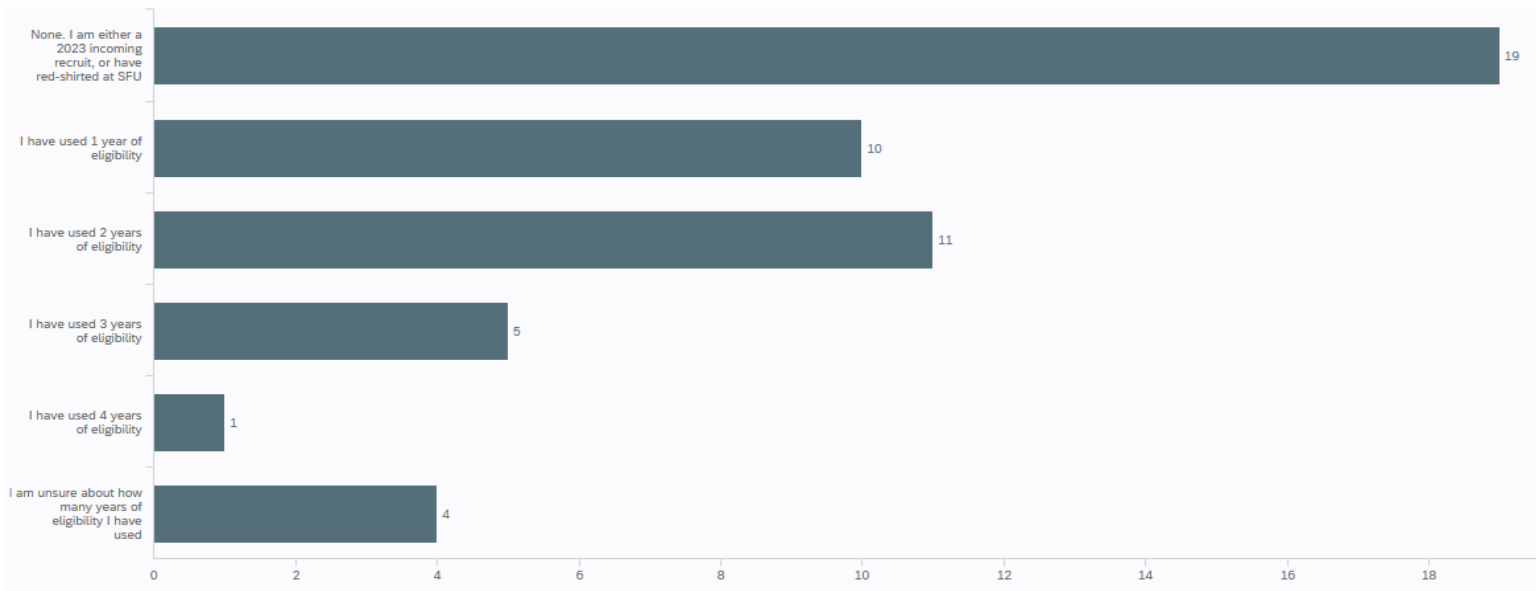
The Special Advisor conducted a survey of football student-athletes that provided additional insights about the returning cohort of players. A total of 50 players (including incoming recruits) completed the survey.

Players were asked about their intention of returning to SFU, illustrated as follows:

Return to SFU?	Number
1. I plan to return to SFU	N = 39
2. I do not plan to return to SFU	N = 3
3. I am undecided	N = 8

This information is consistent with the Department's internal data and portends, at best, 47 potential players *if* all of the undecided players came back. These numbers also do not account for the ineligible players as noted in the Department's analysis. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the number of returning players could drop below 40. This does not account for additional player attrition throughout the season due to injury and other health factors.

Another concern is the level of football playing experience amongst those players who plan to return. This is illustrated below according to the self-reported eligibility status of players.



A total of 19 of the potential returning players have not used any eligibility meaning they have never played in a university football game. This includes new recruits and returning players who have “red-shirted” (meaning to practice with the team but not play in games). Another 10 players indicated 1 year of university football playing experience. Only 6 players indicated 3 or more years of university playing experience.

4. Player Safety

Decisions should be made out of an abundance of caution for player safety. The low number of returning players combined with the noted inexperience pose a significant health and safety risk in the sport of football. The Special Advisor consulted with additional coaches and staff involved in U SPORTS who *all* shared similar concerns about the physical demands of the sport and the safety concerns of fielding such an inexperienced team with low numbers. As a former AD, I share these concerns. Exacerbating this is the fact that the players have been inactive (versus other teams training 6 days/week) and there is no coaching staff.

5. Player Experience & Expectations

It is likely that the returning players would welcome and value any competitive opportunities, despite the patchwork nature of the available opponents and the physical risks they may be willing to accept. However, the University must act in the best interest of the student-athletes who may not fully appreciate these risks.

Furthermore, it is important to carefully manage player expectations as the Special Advisor continues the work of examining the potential for the SFU football program to return “in 2024 or later.” There is much complexity surrounding a return in 2024 based on the membership policies of Canada West, U SPORTS, and the NAIA that would require an exemption to current rules in order to admit football as a singular sport. Helpful discussions are ongoing with all of these organisations with findings to be reported in

September as dictated by the Terms of Reference. The concept of providing competitive opportunities in 2023 was discussed as a form of “bridge” to a potential return in 2024. However, if a return to play in 2024 is determined not to be feasible, players who choose to return to SFU in 2023 would be further disadvantaged as it concerns their football aspirations. A decision by SFU not to provide exhibition games or scrimmages in 2023 based on safety and logistical reasons as described herein will also free up players to make decisions without further delay about their academic and athletic pursuits.

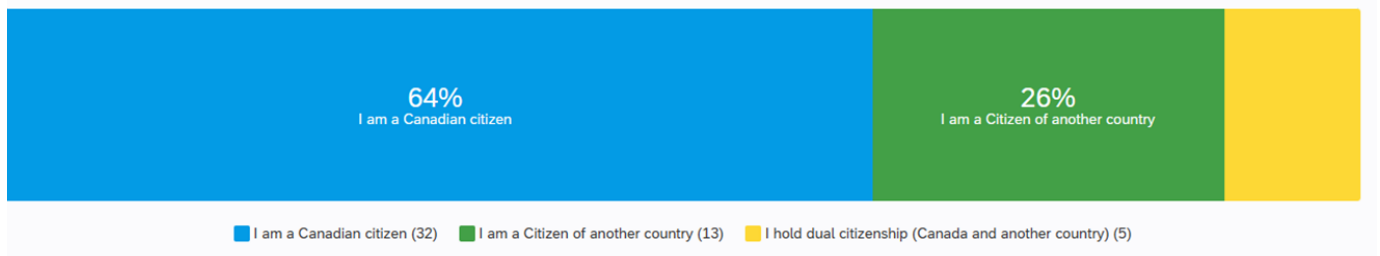
Appendix B: Football Student-Athlete Survey Results

Note: Feedback to open-ended questions includes statements of fact as well as statements of opinion by student-athletes.

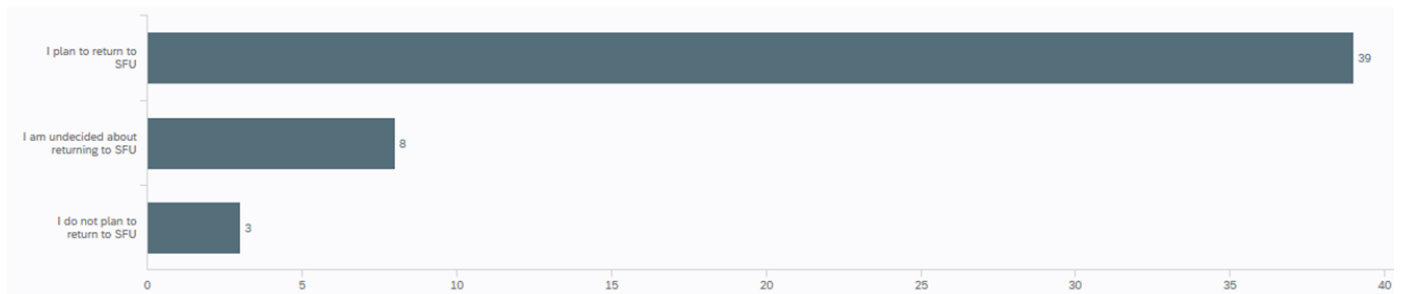
1. Please indicate if you wish to provide your name, or remain anonymous.



2. What is your citizenship?



3. The Special Advisor understands that your decision to return to SFU is a fluid process and may be contingent on several factors. Based on the information that you have as of TODAY, what is your intention to return to SFU?



4. How far have you progressed in your academic program at SFU?

Field	Count
1. I am an incoming student (i.e. 2023 recruit)	12%, n=6
2. I have completed 1 year of study at SFU	28%, n=14
3. I have completed 2 years of study at SFU	16%, n=8
4. I have completed 3 years of study at SFU	20%, n=10
5. I have completed 4 years of study at SFU	16%, n=8
6. I am in a graduate program at SFU	0%, n=0
7. Other	8%, n=4
Total	100%, n=50

5. How many years of football eligibility have you completed as of today?

Field	Count
1. None. I am either an incoming recruit or have red-shirted at SFU	38%, n=19
2. I have used 1 year of eligibility at SFU	20%, n=10
3. I have used 2 years of eligibility at SFU	22%, n=11
4. I have used 3 years of eligibility at SFU	10%, n=5
5. I have used 4 years of eligibility at SFU	2%, n=1
6. I am unsure about how many years of eligibility I have used	8%, n=4
Total	100%, n=50

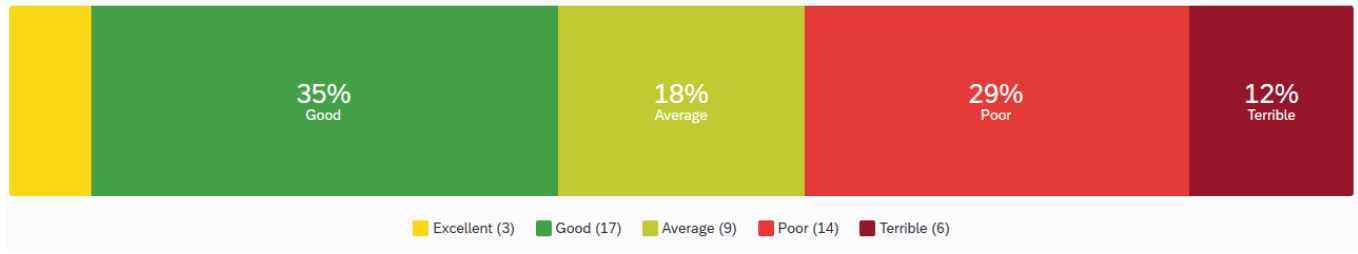
*58% of respondents (n=39) have used 1 year or less of eligibility.

*12% of respondents (n=6) have used 3 or more years of eligibility.

6. The University has communicated various supports and resources since the April 4 announcement. Please indicate if you have accessed any of these supports. Multiple answers are permitted (e.g. you may or may not have used a service, but may plan to in the future).

Support Service	Yes, I have used since April 4	No, I have not used since April 4	I may use this resource in the future	Total
1. Priority enrollment	22.95%, n=14	31.15%, n=19	45.90, n=28	61
2. Access to NCAA academic advisors	24.56, n=14	36.84%, n=21	38.60%, n=22	57
3. Supports for first-year students through the NCAA Learning Coach program	19.23%, n=10	57.69%, n=30	23.08%, n=12	52
4. Tutoring for up to 5 hrs. per fall & spring semester	6.90%, n=4	58.62%, n=34	34.48%, n=20	58
5. Varsity weight room	9.68%, n=6	51.61%, n=32	38.71%, n=24	62
6. Locker in Lorne Davies Complex	14.29%, n=9	46.03%, n=29	39.68%, n=25	63
7. Access to SFU Sports Medicine	16.39%, n=10	44.26%, n=27	39.34%, n=24	61
8. Mental Health & Well-Being Supports & Resources	15.79%, n=9	47.37%, n=27	36.8%, n=21	57
9. SFU Compliance Coordinator for Transfer/Eligibility Support	25.00%, n=14	51.79%, n=29	23.21%, n=13	56

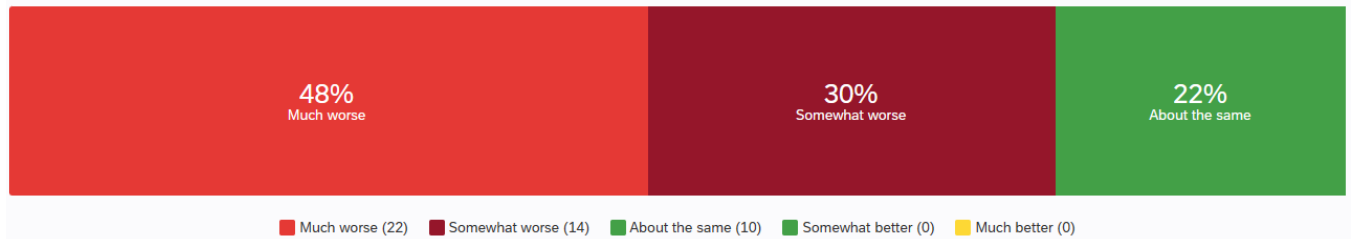
7. Prior to the April 4 announcement, how would you describe your overall experience as a student-athlete at SFU? This includes the combination of your athletic and academic experiences.



* 41% described their overall experience at SFU prior to April 4 as Poor or Terrible.

* 41% described their overall experience at SFU prior to April 4 as Good or Excellent.

8. Based on your SFU football experience prior to April 4 2023, how would you rate the overall SFU Football program compared to your NCAA DII counterparts?



* 78% described the SFU football program as Much worse or Somewhat worse than NCAA DII counterparts. Less than a quarter (22%) of respondents consider the SFU football program on par with their NCAA DII peers, and no one considered the SFU football program to be Somewhat better or Much better.

9. Help us understand why you rated your overall student-athlete experience and football program this way.

Student-Athlete Experience and Football Program Themes¹⁵²

☑ - denotes a positive example associated with the theme

☒ - denotes a negative example associated with the theme

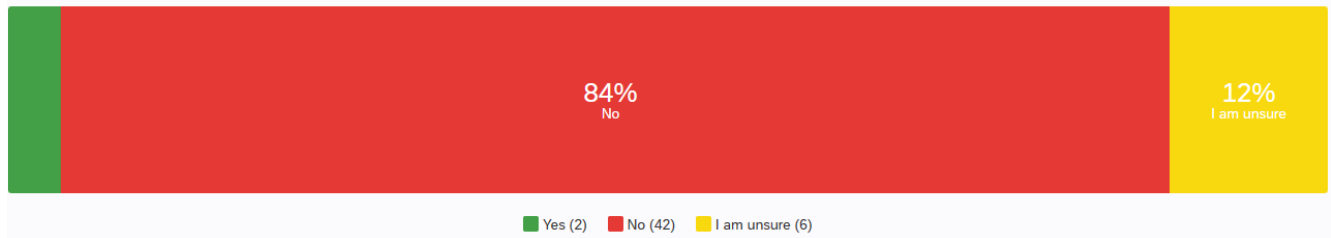
Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Academic experience	<p>☑ “From the academic side of things, I have had mostly positive reactions. I enjoy the majority of my classes. Most of my professors are kind, amicable and willing to assist when necessary.</p> <p>☑ “My academic experience has been challenging and engaging to me.”</p> <p>☑ “All the profs/Tas were great and helped me to learn.”</p> <p>☑ “I was enjoying learning at a highly prestigious university.”</p> <p>☑ “CAL (student supports) has been super helpful and supportive for me.”</p> <p>☒ “This last year our administration cut our tutoring supports from unlimited sessions and hours to a 5-hour maximum per student-athlete per semester...as a Learning Coach I watched many of my freshmen struggle with the lack of support.”</p> <p>☒ “They cut back our supports for academics despite the ridiculous travel schedule which negatively impacted our study time.”</p> <p>☒ “Services such as tutoring were cut heavily.”</p> <p>☒ “Our team has super high turnover rates for academic reasons. It is rare for there to be more than 2 seniors in a position group because of this turnover”</p>
Football Resources	<p>☒ “(Not) a viable amount of resources to compete at the level that is required to play division 2 football.”</p> <p>☒ “We were always at a competitive disadvantage when it came to scholarship money.”</p> <p>☒ “Less scholarships means less talented players are being recruited...”</p> <p>☒ “The university does not give us a real chance to compete based on low funding and very little support to our team.”</p> <p>☒ “The struggle to get resources and support from administration has hindered my experience.”</p> <p>☒ “There seems to be no effort by the administration to ensure we can compete at the same level as our opponents. Coming from a Juco (Junior College) in the</p>

¹⁵² Football student-athlete themes include verbatim quotes from survey responses that are representative examples of broader football student-athlete sentiments of each theme that emerged.

	<p>states, I expected the program to be much better in regards to how it is run That is far from the case.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “We are not set up for success as we are underfunded by a significant amount compared to teams we are playing against.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “As a program it has done poorly to support its athletes across the board. Lots of our student-athletes have felt this way, football especially.”</p>
Coaching	<p><input type="checkbox"/> “The coaching turnover from 2019-Present has been, in my eyes, unacceptable and concerning.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “...The program had become a revolving door for coaches.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “I did not have a position coach for the entirety of my two years at Simon Fraser.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The coaching staff was very welcoming as a recruit, and I was excited to join the program.</p>
Equipment and Athletic Facilities	<p><input type="checkbox"/> “We aren’t given sufficient equipment (i.e. shoulder pads for specific positions).”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “Our equipment is not as up to date as other schools.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “The carpet for a turf that we have to practice on everyday.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “...I fell on the turf that literally felt like concrete because it wasn’t updated.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “We couldn’t get a keypad lock on door (of locker room) for 2 years...We’ve had thousands of dollars of personal items stolen in locker room over the past 2 years...”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “Internal issues include...field would not be cleared of snow until the day before our exhibition game with UBC...”</p>
Nutrition	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> “Provided food during fall camp has been limited and poor in quality in the past. This last season steps were made in the right direction to provide for players’ needs.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “Due to the lack of budget, our meals, especially lunch, during summer training were insufficient and we didn’t have a proper place to eat...”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “I was part of the group that physically starved on road trips because our dinner surplus couldn’t support a full meal.”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> “Went to the food bank due to lack of proper nutrition...”</p>
Student-Athlete Community	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Sense of unity in the football locker room.”</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “My teammates are great and I enjoy being around them every day we all support each other.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The community built by athletics is special and has benefitted my life greatly.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The support from coaches, teammates, and other athletes is what kept me going through these trying times.” <input type="checkbox"/> “There is a disconnect between all sports teams on campus.” <input type="checkbox"/> “I’ve hated watching the sports programs I care about not get the attention they deserve (ALL OF THEM)...”
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “Our travelling situation has been mixed in quality.” <input type="checkbox"/> “Travelled all but 3 games, was very stressed tired and worn down from all of the travel. Grades suffered tremendously.” <input type="checkbox"/> “The Lone Star Conference was not ideal due to the travel and having to play (home games) in Blaine was unfortunate.”
Student-Athlete Consultation & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “Even things like the name change felt like it was never really our decision.” <input type="checkbox"/> “The administration ignored our requests (such as putting a padlock on the locker room door), disregarded our opinions (playing in Blaine), and threatened us when we were trying to help ourselves (shovelling the field prior to Shrum Bowl because they wouldn’t plow it).” <input type="checkbox"/> “Lack of support, commitment, transparency and care from admin...”
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “ The combination of academic and football hardships created a highly stressing environment...”
Campus Engagement & Sport Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “There is 0 campus engagement.” <input type="checkbox"/> “I’m from the States and to see how sports culture up here gets treated is really sad. The same love and passion for the game just doesn’t seem to be there, but I think it could work. Y’all just need to put more money into it and get the communities involved.?” <input type="checkbox"/> “I felt as though we were both unwanted and underfunded.”

10. Have you ever been asked to provide feedback to the Department concerning an evaluation of the football program, coaching staff, or support services providers (for example, formally asking for your feedback as part of an annual review)?



11. From your perspective as a student-athlete and member of the football team, what future program investments and support services do you feel are necessary to operate a competitive and sustainable interuniversity football program at SFU?

List of Future Program Investments and Support Services

Note: The following list of future program investments and support services is provided in rank order according to the number of responses provided for each category.

1. Competitive funding (n=33)

- Includes references to equipment, recruiting, travel, scholarships, nutrition.
- This was the most common theme expressed.

2. SFU sport culture & more support from administration (n=9)

3. Restored academic support/tutoring (n=8)

- This was also a frequent response to Questions 8 and 9.

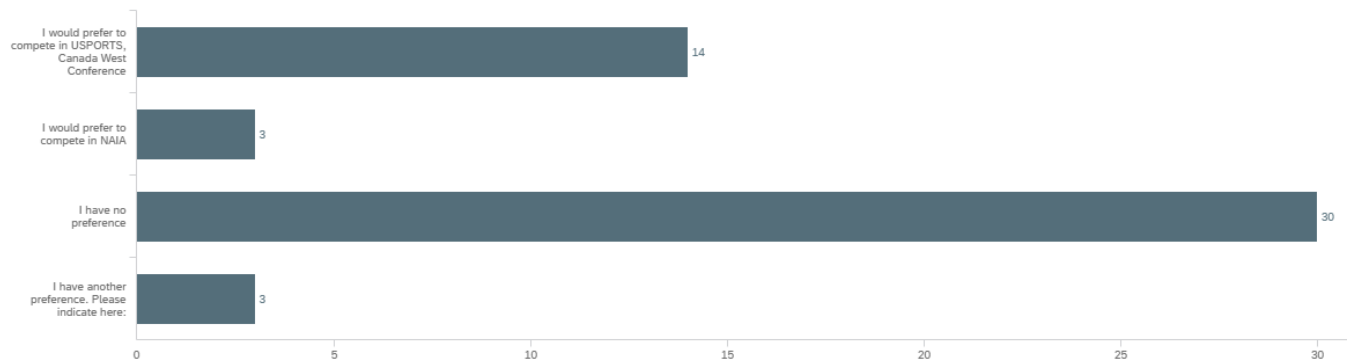
4. Facility improvements (n=6)

5. Greater transparency and communication with student-athletes (n=5)

6. Other responses (n=14)

- Connections to community and volunteer opportunities (n=4)
- Sports psychologist/mental health supports (n=3)
- Affordable housing (n=3)
- Dedicated football team manager (n=2)
- Stable league to play in (n=1)
- Work opportunities for student-athletes (n=1)

12. Do you have a preference in terms of what league to play in should more than one option be available?



The majority of respondents have no preference where to play but many players prefer to compete in U SPORTS in the Canada West Conference (n=14) versus only three (3) individuals who preferred the NAIA. The following is a summary of all responses in support of competing in Canada West and U SPORTS:

- "A Canadian school should be in a Canadian league."
- "I always felt like our competition level is on the same level as the U SPORTS/Can West teams."
- "Heightens rivalry and reasonably competitive competition."
- "It gives us a better opportunity to win as the teams will have similar funding and talent and as we saw in the Shrum Bowl last year the game was very close."
- "SFU and UBC happens more often and travel wouldn't take so long."
- "Easier travel for the team and possibly cheaper."
- "I believe we would be a better fit and be more competitive in U SPORTS."
- "SFU would be a more competitive team against their opponents, we wouldn't have to travel as much allowing us to focus on our education a little more especially because SFU is known for the difficult schooling."
- "I think it is most feasible for SFU to travel within Canada. Canwest would be the best option and give the best opportunity for our guys professionally."
- "I prefer U SPORTS because I would like to compete against other Canadian universities and have the opportunity to play in the Vanier Cup."
- "Would be able to compete within the country we play in. Would have competitive games."
- "Easiest transition I think."

- “Local, seems fun, competitive teams.”
- “I believe it makes the most sense for our situation. As it has been made known that U.S. teams are not willing to fly to BC.”

Appendix C: Department of Athletics and Recreation Staff Survey

Note: feedback to open-ended questions includes statements of fact as well as statements of opinion by staff.

1. Department Affiliation

Field	Count
Varsity Athletics	63.27%, n=31
Recreation	8.16%, n=4
My role spans both Athletics and Recreation	28.57%, n=14
	n=49

2. Employment Relationship

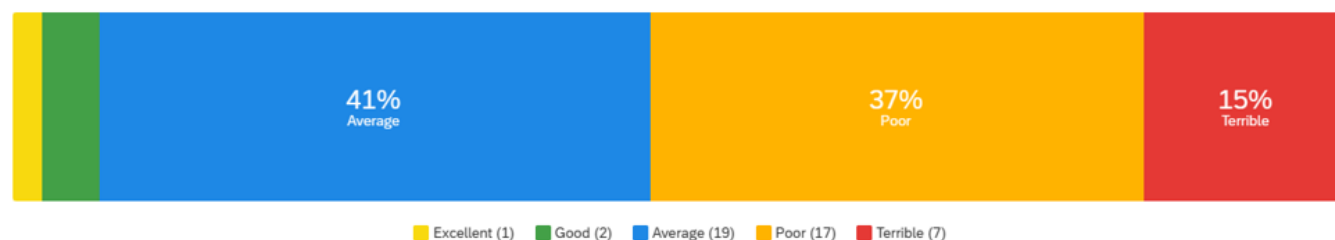
Field	Count
I am a full-time employee	87.76%, n=43
I am a part-time employee	6.12%, n=3
Other	6.12%, n=3
	n=49

3. Staff Roles

Field	Count
Varsity Coach	33.33%, n=16
Administrative Role	43.75%, n=21
Integrated Support Team (IST) – e.g. medical, therapy, counseling, strength & conditioning, other student service support	18.75%, n=9
Other	4.17%, n=2
	n=48

4. Prior to the termination of the football program on April 4, 2023, how would you describe the capacity of the Department to deliver its varsity sports programs (resources including team budgets, support services for student-athletes, etc.)?

Department of Athletics and Recreation Capacity Described by Staff



More than half of the staff (52%, n=34) described the capacity of the Department as “Poor” or “Terrible” compared with three individuals (6.5%, n=3) who described the capacity as “Good” or “Excellent.”

5. In the space below, help us better understand why you described the capacity this way.

5.1 Staff Themes¹⁵³: Capacity in the Department

✔ - denotes a positive example associated with the theme

✘ - denotes a negative example associated with the theme

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Varsity Funding	<p>✘ “Our budgets are not where they need to be to compete at the level we are asking for the sports that have higher demands with NCAA rules.”</p> <p>✘ “SFU does not have the ability to deliver an exceptional student-athlete experience with its current resources, if nothing changes.”</p> <p>✘ “We are operating at capacity to stay afloat.”</p> <p>✘ “Teams are also under-funded where not all sports have full-time assistant coaches.”</p> <p>✘ “We are over budget in almost every possible way.”</p> <p>✘ “Quite simply, we do not have adequate funding to meet the minimum requirements for (our, non-football, varsity) program.”</p>
Physical Infrastructure	<p>✘ “The Building including physio and weight room were built for a bit over two hundred athletes...there are now almost 400. We are 150 athletes over space...”</p> <p>✘ “Flex times (for strength and conditioning), however, are a challenge as the bog doesn’t have capacity for the 400 student-athletes.”</p>
Staffing	<p>✔ “We have the infrastructure now in place that was not there before — we have an Associated AD, a Facility Manager, Director of Operations — all positions that were sorely needed and can help us be successful...”</p> <p>✔ “All student-athletes receive a tremendous amount of support on all levels.”</p> <p>✘ “...We have such good people working in positions here but they are overworked, over-stretched and doing things that are not in their job description...They are underpaid for the positions they are doing and the tasks that</p>

¹⁵³ Staff Themes include verbatim quotes from survey responses that are representative examples of broader staff sentiments of each theme that emerged.

	<p>they do but if they do not do these those tasks, the public or our relationships with them suffer.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ “We are so far behind in all aspects to support athletes sufficiently for the university level.” ☒ “Business administration role is beyond capacity dealing with the financial aspect of running all teams and all the HR items associated with staffing all teams.” ☒ “The lack of commitment to our staffing needs...has been amplified in the last few years.” ☒ ”Appropriate medical coverage for Intercollegiate Athletics is a calculation of how many athletic therapists are needed to cover a varsity sports program...We are assessed at needing 11.08 and currently have 4 full-time staff and one 10-month contract.” ☒ “We do not have sufficient doctor help and nowhere enough specialist or MRI etc.” ☒ “We have not met our promise to our student-athletes to support them through injury.” ☒ “We are 150 athletes over on physio staff to support.” ☒ “We routinely encourage our student-athletes to seek out outside physical therapy or third-party medicine. So much so that we now tailor our scholarships to the individual athlete who has extra funds to seek outside medicine when it arises...” ☒ “Mental Health support. Athletics had to self-fund .5 of a position to address mental health concerns...”
<p>High-Performance Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ “Bringing the best athletes in Canada together and just saying ‘go play’ is not high performance. The programming/support provided is what creates HP. Such as sport medicine, facility, top licensed coaching, coach development/mentorship, video, nutrition, etc.” ☒ “We are so far behind in all aspects to support athletes sufficiently for the university level...We cannot accept a pregame meal of Subway sandwiches to be the standard...” ☒ “There’s no equity between sports. Programs are all funded differently and no one knows why and how those decisions are made.”

5.2 Staff Themes: Department Culture

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Departmental Support & Staff Engagement	<p>☒ “And that (staff) disconnect with admin. I think is also seen with our body of student-athletes. They do not feel connected to our department. There is not a supportive atmosphere through which they can easily voice their concerns or simply just be supported. It is simply currently not an environment where teams can excel. The teams that are doing so in spite of the department at large.”</p> <p>☒ “I feel we as a staff could help if we knew what our problems were, had KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators), and could have a common goal as a department we were working towards.”</p>
Communication	<p>☒ “Lines of communication are not well understood and lack cohesion. Interactions seem disjointed between various partners and direct answers are not provided.”</p> <p>☒ “There has been a lack of responsibility, communication, and initiative to make this department to be well functioning.”</p>
Collaboration	<p>☒ “Most importantly, there is no collaborative spirit among the teams because we all feel like we are competing against each other and grasping for straws.”</p>
Issues Management & Trust	<p>☒ “There are multiple ongoing, simultaneous issues which shake the trust of the department. Although they are not all founded/validated at this point, the chaos and constantly being asked questions about the integrity of this department from others outside the institution does not instill confidence.”</p>

5.3 Staff Themes: Department Vision and Values

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Department Vision	<p>☒ “There is no clearly defined vision as to what SFU Athletics is, what it values, and where it wants to go as an institution to continue to improve or evolve its department. It is unclear if SFU Athletics desires to be a Championship winning institution.”</p> <p>☒ “With no clear vision of where we are going and what we value, in addition to lack of accountability, we are just kind of wandering through mediocrity. We are by no means thriving, and struggling to meet the bare minimum.”</p>

5.4 Staff Themes: Football

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Football Priority & Varsity Program Equity	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Anecdotally, it feels as if football has an outsized influence and priority over other sports...in the weight room we are pushed to the margins while football occupies prime times, our coaching staff is not proportional to theirs...”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Majority of our resources go to football, especially the Sports Medicine resources. We are already under-staffed in how many sports medicine staff we should have for the number of student-athletes we have and the other sports suffer due to the capacity football takes up.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “A lot of priority and focus went into the football program (i.e. million dollar change room facility upgrade for the football team only when other facilities that impact the entire athletic program should have been prioritized such as physiotherapy facilities).”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The non-football sports are impacted because their resources are underfunded, and in the past FB has been prioritized over the other sports.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “I believe that the (football) program funds could be used toward another more fruitful program.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “As a staff, at many levels, we are just barely able to function with football in operation. The large roster and coaching staff size puts a strain on our entire institution. Sports med, communications and marketing, and academic resources cannot function in an effective manner with football. We are strained at the best of times.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The inequity does not just exist because of football. Some programs are well-funded and have the facilities and equipment they need to deliver their service.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “People believe football can’t work here. I don’t believe that at all. It just needs to be run and accounted for properly.”</p>
Academic Advising	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Last year was a great example of cramped capacity with NCAA Academic Advising. Football had their biggest recruiting class in years and as such all introductory meetings with advisors were group meetings on Zoom. This is a drastic change from what we promise our incoming freshmen where we aim to offer a personal individual meeting with each new player. This has had direct results on student-athlete success and well-being — we had more freshmen struggle this year with courses than any prior year. A direct cause of overcapacity.”</p>

6. What suggestions do you have to improve the capacity within the Department to deliver and support its varsity sports programs?

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Strategic Planning	<p>“Develop a multi-year plan and have key checkpoints along the way.”</p> <p>“Needs analysis of every unit within the athletics department. This will help the development of KPIs within the Department.”</p> <p>“I feel this is a moment to look at the overall structure of athletics and come up with a new mission, vision, strategy.”</p> <p>“A full and transparent review is needed as a lack of transparency has guided Athletics away from the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the University and completely destroyed a Recreation department and facilities that is much needed to service the SFU Community...”</p> <p>“Implement business planning and accountability across all areas of the department. Currently, there are no strategic 1, 2, and 5-year plans in any areas...Currently, there are no plans except in Marketing and Communications and Recreation.”</p> <p>“Vision and KPIs – what are we trying to achieve? What does success look like? How do we measure it? What happens if we achieve? What happens if we fail?”</p>
Staffing	<p>“A 360 review is done every year on every staff member.”</p> <p>“Any Department lives and dies with the coaches and staff they have.”</p> <p>“We are in need of more support staff who directly service our student-athletes.”</p> <p>“Deliberate professional development through needs analysis of staff members.”</p> <p>“Many people are here in a non-permanent role. This has to change. It is absolutely hilarious to chat about improving capacity because there is literally no guarantee our department can even keep the number of staff we have now.”</p> <p>“Coaches and Administrators should be held to a HIGHER standard to perform and execute.”</p>
Communication	<p>“Develop morale amongst staff through communication and transparent leadership.”</p> <p>“Create tight, honest and genuine feedback loops to help influence change...”</p>
Alumni Engagement	<p>“Improved engagement amongst alumni and prospective donors.”</p> <p>“Robust advancement department. Better, closer and more collaboration with this area.”</p>

Teams/Student-Athletes	<p>“Lower the number of athletes to match the budget.”</p> <p>“Reduce the number of athletes to match our current staffing and funding levels.”</p> <p>“Implement program caps on roster sizes for ALL sports to eliminate strain on resources.”</p> <p>“We simply do not have the ability to service the size of our varsity program in its current state.”</p> <p>“Reallocating and investing sports to ensure they have the resources, equipment, and personnel they need.”</p> <p>“Like many Div 2 schools that have done before us, I believe we need to cut football and redistribute our budgets and department resources to create an equitable environment for all sports.”</p> <p>“Most coaches will highlight cutting Football and redeploying it towards the other athletics program will help...and it will, but not sustainably.”</p> <p>“Teams – Coaches must present plans to meet KPIs of Varsity Athletics, reviewed annually...”</p> <p>“Equal distribution of funding and support across all teams.”</p>
Facilities	<p>“Convert the football locker room into a Strength and Conditioning Room and Sport Therapist clinic. This will benefit all student-athletes, not just one team.”</p> <p>“Discontinue the on-campus (25-metre) pool and save \$500,000 annually on pool maintenance and staffing costs in aquatics. Forge a partnership with the City of Burnaby to become the new home of SFU Swim in their new Olympic-sized pool scheduled to open in 2 years.”</p>

7. Describe the impacts that you have experienced since the varsity football program was terminated on April 4.

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
Inappropriate Behavior and Decreased Morale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ “Athletic department morale at an all-time low.” ☒ “Personal verbal attacks and bullying.” ☒ “The sheer language and abuse that many have taken is quite frankly unacceptable.” ☒ “The entire department has had to limit their posts on social media in fear of the backlash being faced online. Records were broken this year in multiple sports,

	<p>championships won, and still we could not celebrate those successes to the extent they deserved.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ “Stress, uncertainty, frustration, hopelessness.” ☒ “Personally threatened in public with my family present...” ☒ “I very much enjoy working in Athletics and Recreation, however, these past few months have been very difficult, I have been trying to manage the pressure and stress as best I can but my anxiety has hit an all-time high when it comes to dealing with football.” ☒ “There has been intimidation by certain groups to try and secure alliances in reinstating the program.” ☒ “Reading the social media sickened me and caused stress...” ☒ “The football boosters and support groups that have popped up on social media have made everyone else’s lives uncomfortable to the point where nobody feels safe voicing a different opinion.” ☒ “We had no role in the decision and communicating the decision but we are all described as professionally incompetent online.” ☒ “This experience has turned coach against coach, student-athlete against student-athlete, and forced everyone to pick a side.”
<p>Lack of Communication and Transparency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ “Cloak and dagger, no transparency, the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing, just always playing catch up and never feeling prepared.” ☒ “We have been inundated with requests, comments, and angry emails with no playbook on what we should be saying or communicating.” ☒ “The communication plan was a failure from the start. Our athletics communication department was not consulted in any way.” ☒ “A long time has passed since April 4th yet we have not had ONE all-staff meeting where we could receive information and to have our voices heard. This has all made a very precarious situation even more stressful as we needed strong leadership to help guide us through what has been a significant challenge for every single staff member here.” ☒ “Not having a single staff meeting post-April 4th decision is unacceptable...So many unanswered questions and no forum to ask them and no consideration for the impacts this decision made on us as staff members in the department.

	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Not once did anyone ask us if we needed support down in the clinic or provide us with any information until our meeting with (the Special Advisor).”¹⁵⁴</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The lack of transparency and poor communication strategy really unnecessarily impacted students, coaches, and the football community.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “We are the stakeholders and our participation in discussing and problem-solving this has been ignored.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “A&R staff are the evangelists in the community and we have no idea what to say.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “A positive impact since the decision was made was that I engaged in conversations with other staff...It was encouraging to speak with others who were on the same page and see a bright future within our department.”</p>
Student-Athlete Recognition	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Achievements of our student-athletes were hijacked by spam comments to sign petitions or calls to fire SFU administrators.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “I have seen them overwhelm any social media posts we have put out with links to the football petition...This has absolutely ruined attempts to celebrate our student-athletes, who have all been ensnared by this, beginning with the cancellation of the banquet. With some of the unhinged responses we have seen, I am hesitant to publicly celebrate the students who remain SFU athletes.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The other big impact was the cancellation of the Athletics Gala. This event was meant to celebrate ALL our athletes, but they never got the opportunity...”</p>
Misinformation	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “I have witnessed complete lies told about our staff and department.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The football alumni and the media set the narrative, aided by stretched or downright untrue facts that we were not allowed to comment on. This led to hundreds of comments/messages directing anger, frustration, misogyny, and threats at us...”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “A lot of misinformation and negative assumptions toward SFU Hockey have been put forward. There were rumours that SFU Hockey is the reason that SFU Football was terminated...This is very frustrating and 100% not true...”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The ‘why’ behind the program being terminated is still not well understood and it appears that the reason given – no conference to play in was only the tip of the iceberg.”</p>
SFU Brand and Reputation	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “The negative publicity has certainly affected the school’s reputation..”</p>

¹⁵⁴ Note: The Special Advisor convened an in-person group meeting with the Department on May 18 and was advised that this was the first group meeting of any kind with staff as it concerns the termination of the football program.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “Alumni pulling away from the university and its history and tradition. They no longer want to be associated with the university.” <input type="checkbox"/> “Donors and alumni not wanting to donate until this matter is resolved.” <input type="checkbox"/> “Lack of pride in our school.”
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7. Provide any comments about the viability of resuming interuniversity football at SFU.

Theme	Descriptive Examples of Theme
NCAA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “Football cannot be successful at an NCAA school or in the NAIA for that matter. The financial resources are not in a million miles what would be needed...” <input type="checkbox"/> “Clearly, we are simply unable to compete at the NCAA in this particular sport, and we have been rendered a laughing stock in those leagues which is bad for morale for everyone involved – coaches, players, staff...”
U SPORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Personally, I think Usports would be a viable league for SFU football to return to.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “...more natural rivalries and subsequent fan interest that would follow.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “I would be in support of our football team returning IF we could get an exemption for that specific league.” <input type="checkbox"/> “A transfer to USport does not seem viable.”
Competition in Multiple Leagues (Governing Bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “We are an NCAA school; we don’t want a division of our identity.” <input type="checkbox"/> “Our recruiting, our rules for academics, our rules for scholarships and training are all based on the NCAA model...two leagues is not viable.” <input type="checkbox"/> “There is no room for football to run within another sport governing body.” <input type="checkbox"/> “Allowing a team to move to Usports waters down and jeopardizes our uniqueness.” <input type="checkbox"/> “We were a dual sport governing body school before moving to the NCAA and it caused many challenges.” <input type="checkbox"/> “If football moves to Usports, it is inequitable for one team to have 5 years of eligibility when all other student-athletes only have 4. One team only has to enroll in 9 credit hours while the rest of the student-athletes need to be in 12 credit hours. Scholarship money goes much further when you only need to pay for 9 credit hours.”

Resources & Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Biggest concern for me is proper resources. If we are going to be status quo and bring football back it will be a major problem.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “I think a return of Varsity Football would be a disaster for SFU athletics and would create an unsustainable environment for all sports.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Large resource allocation required to run athletics programs in two different leagues, such as compliance, sports medicine, admin. staff, oversight, the list goes on.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “I understand that funding is hard throughout the University so it will be very difficult to justify to the 40,000 students at SFU to say we need to use more money on Football when there are limited resources and penny pinching happening in all other areas of SFU.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “If there is a plan with alumni engagement and the university working together I believe that could be the best scenario.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “There’s an opportunity to reset varsity athletics at SFU and begin a new era of sustainable success with NCAA programs. We are unique, we are special, and we have the potential for greatness.”
Team Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “We have a culture of celebrating a poor performing team for far too many years, this needs to change.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “As a university coach, my focus is on creating a positive student-athlete experience, and a winning, high-performance program....there is no compelling vision that has been communicated to articulate that there is a desire to mobilize change in this regard (for football).”
Sport of Football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Football is a dying sport in BC and in the world.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Serious injuries and long-term brain health with concussions.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Football is a struggling sport in Canada.”
Reversal of Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Backtracking on this decision will have a significant negative impact on the department.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Eliminating a program for good reason, then reinstating it because of political pressure and bullying is not valid or legitimate.” <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “Should football return as the result of this process, it would signify that Simon Fraser University encourages the engagement typified by the bullying, lying, and harassment we have witnessed so far.”

List of Acronyms & Abbreviations

2022 Review	2022 Athletics and Recreation Review
AFAs	Athletic Financial Awards
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
CFC	Canadian Football Chat
CFL	Canadian Football League
CFLPA	Canadian Football League Players Association
CIS	Canadian Interuniversity Sport
CJFL	Canadian Junior Football League
CPM	Critical Performance Measures
Department	SFU Department of Athletics and Recreation
DI/DII/DIII	Division One/Division Two/Division Three
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
FCS	Football Champion Subdivision
FVBF	Friends of Varsity Blues Football
FY	Fiscal Year
GNAC	Great Northwest Athletics Conference
GPA	Grade Point Average
IPP	NCAA Institutional Performance Program
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LSC	Lone Star Conference
MGSS	McLaren Global Sport Solutions Inc.
MLS	Major League Soccer
NAIA	National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NATA	National Athletic Trainers' Association
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletics Association
OUA	Ontario University Athletics
RAF	Recreation-Athletics Fee
RFP	Request for Proposal
RMAC	Rocky Mountain Athletics Conference
SAAC	Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
SFPIRG	Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group
SFSS	Simon Fraser Student Society
SFU	Simon Fraser University
SFU RHA	Simon Fraser University Residence Hall Association
SFU SOCA	Simon Fraser University Students of Caribbean and African Ancestry
Society	SFU Football Alumni Society
The Club	Regina Rams Football Club
UBC	University of British Columbia
University	Capitalized use of 'University' refers to SFU
UofR	University of Regina
UofT	University of Toronto
VPSI	Vice-Provost and Associate VP, Students and International

- End of Report -