

**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY PUEBLO**  
*Intercollegiate Athletics*

**-ANNUAL REPORT FOR STUDENT FEE GOVERNING BOARD (SFGB)-**

Presented by Paul Plinske, Vice President for Athletics and Strategic Partnerships-  
November 8, 2024

This Annual Report is written to outline the function and overall operations of Intercollegiate Athletics, as required by the Student Fee Governing Board (SFGB). It is also our intent to describe the purpose, management and operations of Pack Athletics while outlining our fiscal revenues and expenses.

**Student Fee Sub-Committee for Athletics**

The Student Fee Sub-Committee for Athletics is made up of the following individuals:

- Jeremiah Carter, Associated Students Government (ASG)
- William Downey, Associated Students Government (ASG)
- Faith Valdez, Associated Students Government (ASG)
- Ashley Tosh, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) President
- Krista Bridgmon, Athletic Board of Controls
- Jenna McKinley-Fall, Associate Athletic Director/Senior Woman Administrator
- Paul Plinske, Vice President for Athletics and Strategic Partnerships

The committee met three times in the fall semester (October 28, November 4 and December 5), and discussed several critical items with all members of the sub-committee in attendance.

The meeting agendas were as follows:

- Thursday, October 28 Meeting
  - Committee Introductions
  - Review the function and overall operations of Athletics
  - Discuss FY25 Student Fee Request written in spring
  - Review Student Fee Committee expectations
  - Review FY25 Budget, including:
    - History of Fund Balance
    - History of Student Fees
    - Annual Treasury Interest
- Monday, November 4 Meeting
  - Student Fee Annual Report
  - FY25 Budget
  - Fall 2024 Ticket Revenue
  - E&G and Student Fee Revenue Historical Analysis
  - Sport Module Review and Participation Numbers
  - Partnering with other entities to develop internal funding model
- Thursday, December 5 Meeting
  - Plan for FY26 Student Fee Request
  - Review Fall 2024 Ticket Revenue

- Discuss partnership with outside entities to generate external funding support for Athletics

## **Mission and Vision**

The mission of Intercollegiate Athletics is to develop champions through academic excellence, athletic achievement and community engagement with the ultimate goal of building productive citizens. Our vision is to be an athletic powerhouse and the standard for holistic student-athlete development and academic opportunity.

As a Department, we measure and promote our accomplishments in three critical areas. Each of these align with our mission and vision. During the 2022-23 academic year, the Athletic Department had several historical accomplishments.

### **1. Academic Excellence**

- 3.23 Grade Point Average (among 640 student-athletes) – **HIGHEST IN SCHOOL HISTORY**
  - Women's Golf – **3.613 GPA**
  - Men's Cross Country – **3.417 GPA**
- 5 Academic All-Americans
- 15 student-athletes with 4.0 GPA
- Football – RMAC Brechler Award Recipient (highest GPA in RMAC – **3.175 GPA**) – **1<sup>ST</sup> TIME EVER**

### **2. Athletic Achievement**

- 24<sup>th</sup> in LEARFIELD Directors' Cup (out of 305 NCAA Division II institutions)
- 4<sup>th</sup> in RMAC All-Sports Competition Cup (out of 15 RMAC member institutions)
- 4 National Runner-Ups
  - Men's Soccer (18-5-3 record)
  - Justin Jenks, Indoor Shot Put
  - Katherine Higgins, Indoor Shot Put
- 16 All-American Performances

### **3. Community Engagement**

- 8,451 Community Service Hours – **MOST IN SCHOOL HISTORY**
  - State Fair Parade/Rodeo, Rake Up Pueblo
  - Boys and Girls Club and YMCA Junior ThunderWolves
  - D60 and D70 Partnerships
- Hosted the 2023 CHSAA State Football Championships (6-man, 8-man, 1A, 2A and 3A)
- Hosted the 2024 CHSCA All-State Games

### **4. Additional Accomplishments**

- 2024 Great Britain Olympic Trail Participants
  - Helen Braybrook (800-meter run)
  - Margot Thomas-Gatel (Steeplechase)
  - Reece Sharman-Newel (800-meter run)

As a Department, we supported 619 student-athletes in 2023-24 (418 males, 201 females). We also had over 30 cheer and dance team members engaged in extracurricular activities for CSU Pueblo.

The Athletic Department tracks its history of participation numbers in order to analyze our funding needs and determine the amount of male and female participants for Title IX purposes. The history of our participation numbers (along with projections for the coming years) is outlined below:

### Number of Student-Athletes

2018-19	532	
2019-20	577	
2020-21	580	
2021-22	636	
2022-23	668	
2023-24	619	
2024-25	560-580	-Projected number
2025-26	580	-Projected based on strategic planning

The average NCAA Division II institution supports 463 student-athletes and 15.9 teams. In 2023-24, CSU Pueblo supported 156 additional student-athletes among our 21 varsity sports (10 men, 11 women). Our 21 sports were led by 65 paid administration, coaches and staff. At the end of 2023-24, we transitioned men's lacrosse from varsity to club status. This will reduce the number of student-athletes by approximately 30 in 2024-25.

In 2024-25 and 2025-26, Athletics will gradually reduce its total number of student-athletes. In 2019, Athletics made a concerted effort to expand roster sizes in all sports in order to assist CSU Pueblo with declining enrollment. Additional student-athletes put a tremendous burden on our budget, created additional work for our support staff and are more difficult to manage. With decreasing participation numbers, we will be able to manage our finances better, support our staff (especially sports medicine and sport performance) and provide a better student-athlete experience.

### **FY25 Student Fee Request**

In our fee request to the SFGB in the spring 2024, we asked for an increase of \$2.00 per credit hour to address the following needs:

**1. Cost of inflation.**

According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Inflation Calculator, Student Fee Revenue of \$1,224,307 (amount of revenue in 2020-21), has the same buying power as \$2,185,168 in 2024. Over the past three years, Athletics has had significant financial shortfalls. Part of these shortfalls can be attributed to the loss of Student Fee Revenue to keep up with the costs of inflation. An increase in our student fee can help address this shortfall.

**2. Student-athlete scholarships.**

Supporting student-athletes is an expensive endeavor. Annually, Student Fee Revenue is used to support student-athlete scholarships (\$350,000 annually). The average student-athlete receives \$5,000 in athletic aid per year. With rising tuition, we are only able to support 70 student-athletes with Student Fee Revenue. Additional support is needed to maintain our levels of support for our student-athletes.

**3. Align with our Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC) peers.**

The average amount of University and Student Fee support provided to each student-athlete in the RMAC is **\$10,801**. CSU Pueblo provides **\$7,872** per student-athlete. This is a difference of **-\$2,929** per student-athlete. To compete with our RMAC counterparts and support the size of our team rosters, it is imperative that we close this financial gap.

**4. Expand our appeal and enhance student success.**

Pack Athletics is experiencing unprecedented success in academics, athletics and community engagement. We want to do more in order to expand the appeal of CSU Pueblo and enhance student success. Athletics brings entertainment to our community, a sense of culture and an activity for all to enjoy. In supporting Athletics at higher level, we are more than likely to see a greater return on our investment.

## FY25 Student Fee Governing Board Distribution

In Spring 2024, the Student Fee Governing Board agreed to increase the Athletics fee to **\$16.25 per credit hour** (\$.75 increase from previous year). The following information below shows the fee schedule for Athletics since 2014-15.

	<b><u>Student Fee Per Credit Hour</u></b>	<b><u>Total Student Fee Revenue</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage Total Budget</u></b>
2014-15	\$12.65	\$1,426,448	25%
2015-16	\$12.65	\$1,329,088	21%
2016-17	\$12.65	\$1,386,055	19%
2017-18	\$13.65	\$1,342,628	19%
2018-19	\$14.00	\$1,335,865	16%
2019-20	\$15.00	\$1,323,507	16%
2020-21	\$15.50	\$1,224,307	14.5%
2021-22	\$15.50	\$1,181,719	14%
2022-23	\$15.50	\$1,140,375	11%
2023-24	\$15.50	\$1,107,058	11%
2024-25	\$16.25	\$1,264,666 (estimate)	11%

### Use of Student Fees

The Athletic Department estimates that its Student Fee Revenue in 2024-25 will be approximately \$1,264,666. This is based on estimates and history of student fees received. Annually, Student Fees are budgeted and used in the following manner:

	<b><u>Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Purpose</u></b>
Scholarships	\$350,000	Attract and retain student-athletes
Operations	\$600,000	Team travel, game officials, uniforms and equipment
Administrative Costs	\$314,666	Student-athlete support

Student fee support is essential to Athletics in that it provides much-needed scholarships and funding for operations. Annually, the Athletic Department spends approximately \$3.3 million on scholarships. The average student-athlete receives approximately \$5,000 in financial aid from Athletics. The \$350,000 in Student Fee support enables Athletics to support 73 student-athletes each year.

At the end of each sport season, we conduct a student-athlete survey (*RealResponse*) to assess the student-athlete's experience to learn how we can improve while building on our recruitment and retention efforts.

The survey takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and is administered in a controlled environment by the administration. Coaches are not allowed to be in attendance. A great deal of information is gathered from our student-athletes, but one of the most essential indicators is the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Following the surveys, the athletic administration reviews all survey results and then presents this information back to the head coaches. The NPS is a common measure of student-athlete satisfaction. The values range from -100 (worst possible) to +100 (best possible). To get the final NPS score, we subtract the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters, then multiply by 100.

In 2023-24, we surveyed 20 varsity sports and the Net Promoter Score (NPS) for the entire department was +17. The highest sports were: Men's Soccer (+70), Baseball (+65), Wrestling (+38) and Football (+33). The lowest scores were: Women's Lacrosse (-100), Women's Tennis (-66) and Women's Soccer (-41).

Overall, the student-athletes rated their Athletic Department at 4.3 out of 5.0. The top variables for the student-athletes were the “weight room”, “atmosphere in the strength facilities” and “knowledge of their coach”. They were critical of “practice/competition facility”, “academics” and “meals”.

Our fall sports were most satisfied with their overall experience. We received negative responses from our winter and spring sport student-athletes. Fall sport satisfaction is expected since we had the most competitive success at that time.

**Student Admission at Sporting Events**

Another critical component to the Student Fee process is that all CSU Pueblo students receive free admission to regular season sporting events. In 2023-24, CSU Pueblo Athletics had 47,662 individuals attending sporting events from the fall to the spring. Student attendance was 2,289 of that total number. Approximately 931 students attended Pack football games; 780 attended men’s and women’s basketball games; and 105 attended volleyball matches. It can be assumed that a large portion of students in attendance are fellow student-athletes.

As of October 24, 2024 (before last game of regular season on November 9), we have had 1,756 students attend Pack football games in the ThunderBowl. This is a substantial increase from the previous year and can be attributed to additional marketing efforts and a move of the student section from the east side of the ThunderBowl to the west side.

It is important to note that NCAA rules permit student-athletes to four (4) complimentary tickets per contest. Parents, family members and other guests may attend a sporting event for free.

**FY25 Financial Report**

In addition to Student Fees, the Athletic Department operates with various funding sources to support its 20 varsity sports. These include both internal and external funding sources. Internal sources are supported through the University (through E&G transfers) and Student Fees. All other sources of revenue are external. The chart below shows the revenue sources used to support Athletics.

	<u><b>2024-25 Budget</b></u>
University E&G Salaries/Benefits	\$3,691,006
University E&G Scholarships	\$1,594,050
Additional E&G (Presidential) Support	\$600,000
Student Fees	\$1,264,666
Foundation (External Sources)	\$1,250,000
Campus and Clinics	\$750,000
Ticket Sales	\$289,000
Transportation	\$274,000
All Other Revenue	\$500,000
<b>TBD</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,212,722</b>

Last year, CSU Pueblo Athletics generated the most external revenue of any NCAA Division II institution in the country. The numbers below reflect the work that is being done by Athletics to support its student athletes.

Corporate Sponsorships	\$750,000	-UCHealth, Pepsi, Pueblo County, etc.
Camps and Clinics	\$750,000	-Over 5,000 campers per summer
Special Events	\$300,000	-CHSAA, CHSCA, facility rentals, etc.
Pack Club Memberships	\$200,000	-Annual donations
Endowment Interest Earnings	\$200,000	-Based on 3% annual return from \$7 million endowment

Sport-Specific Fund Raising	\$200,000	-Student-athlete fund-raising
NCAA Distributions	\$90,000	-NCAA post-season home and away events

For the past 10 years, Athletics has struggled to balance revenues with expenses. The History of Athletics Fund Balance outlines this concern.

### History of Athletics Fund Balance

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Deficit</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
FY19	-\$1,095,610	
FY20	-\$1,946,728	COVID-19; No summer camps
FY21	-\$2,727,573	COVID-19; No summer camps, No football; Loss of Donor
FY22	-\$2,369,077	Loss of Donor; Increase roster sizes (n = 636)
FY23	-\$3,830,632	Loss of Donor; Increase roster sizes (n = 668)
FY24	-\$5,645,545	Loss of Donor, High roster sizes (n = 619)
FY25	TBD	Loss of Donor; No varsity men's lacrosse

There are many factors that contribute to this shortfall. The following is a bullet list of attributing factors.

### Loss of Revenue

- COVID-19 pandemic
- No summer camps in 2020 and 2021
- No football season in 2020
- Loss of Donor and discontinuation of the Friends of Football, LLC in Spring 2021
  - Estimated loss of revenue is \$400,000 per year
- Declining enrollment resulting in a decrease in Student Fee Revenue
- Increase in the total number of student-athletes year over year
  - More student-athletes leads to greater costs for scholarships and operational expenses
- More student-athletes taking Extended Studies courses leading to less Student Credit Hour production
  - Student-athletes spent \$1 million in Extended Studies in 2023-24

### Additional Expenses

- Treasury Interest charges
  - Total amount of interest paid (to date) is \$710,508 (see below)

#### Treasury Interest Charges

FY20	\$62,379
FY21	\$49,941
FY22	\$61,090
FY23	\$166,399
FY24	\$303,857
FY25	\$66,841
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$710,508</b>

- Inflation
  - Cost of team travel (meals, hotels and transportation) and scholarships
- Staff Salaries

## **Moving Forward**

The Athletic Department is committed to addressing its negative fund balance while also working to stabilize its current annual budget. Through a collaboration of efforts between the President and Vice President/CFO, Athletics will receive an additional \$600,000 annually from the CSU Pueblo FY25 Incremental Budget. This funding will be used to balance our budget while providing the support needed for each student-athlete as compared to our RMAC counterparts.

In addition, the reduction of men's lacrosse will decrease our annual operations by approximately \$225,000. With a 20-varsity sport model, we believe this is the most appropriate size for our Athletic Department.

President Valdez and I have been committed to securing naming rights for the ThunderBowl and other auxiliary areas. Also, outside user groups are being solicited for use of various facilities and other large sponsorship opportunities for Athletics.

In closing, we feel that these measures will enable Athletics to have a balanced budget in FY25 while continuing our exceptional service to our student-athletes while maintaining our mission and vision. With additional institutional support and fund-raising efforts, we feel that we can start to chip away at our negative fund balance.

## **Closing**

Please accept this report from the Athletics Student Fee Sub-Committee. We are grateful for your support and appreciate your willingness to engage in meaningful conversations about the success and sustainability of Intercollegiate Athletics at CSU Pueblo.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremiah Carter, Associated Students Government (ASG)  
William Downey, Associated Students Government (ASG)  
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Ashley Tosh, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) President  
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