



EDISON STATE
COLLEGE

Athletics Feasibility Study

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Introduction

This summary is the result of a comprehensive study to determine the practicality and achievability of Edison State College (ESC) returning to intercollegiate competition. The study included an examination of the national association and the State of Florida affiliates for athletic completion, as well as a comparison of state colleges that sponsor intercollegiate athletics within the State of Florida.

This study referenced ESC for both institutional and athletic comparisons and measurements within the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Florida College System Activities Association Council (FCSAA) for Athletic Affairs. The study included an analysis of various institutional, academic, and athletic measures as well as addresses the following areas:

- Title IX analysis and identification of Title IX issues and implications.
- Financial analysis and impact – personnel, scholarships, operations, and facilities.
- Assessment of facility and potential sport offerings – which sports should be offered and the facility requirements for each sport.
- Evaluation of Edison State College’s support systems that would be required to reinstitute a successful intercollegiate athletics program.

Finally, the study included assessments and recommendations that most closely address the current realities at Edison State College and what options are available for returning to intercollegiate athletics in the coming years. These recommendations include both short and long term considerations.

Background on Edison State College

Edison Junior College was established in 1962, with the first location being the Andrew Gwynne Institute Building in downtown Fort Myers. The former elementary school was part of the Lee County Public School system and was pressed into service to house the fledgling junior college. The College was created as part of a nationwide movement to meet the burgeoning demand for higher education directly after World War II.

The athletic teams evolved from intramural sports in the first year to an intercollegiate basketball team beginning in the 1963-64 year, under the leadership of Edison’s first athletic director, Tom Garcia. The athletic teams adopted the Buccaneer as the college mascot with adopted colors of blue and white. Over the years, the college would field teams in baseball, men’s and women’s golf, men’s and women’s tennis, wrestling, softball and volleyball. Edison teams claimed many successes, including the Southern Conference Championship for men’s basketball, under long-time Edison coach, Hugh Thimlar, who served as Edison’s coach for 25 years. The basketball team also produced three All Americans and one NBA player. Men’s golf

won the 1982 state championship and placed among the top 10 in the National Junior College Athletic Association Golf Championships. The men's golf program produced 15 All Americans, among who are Master's and U.S. Open Champion, Fuzzy Zoeller, and PGA tour player, Ivan Smith. Three former Edison women golfers, Terry Jo Myers, Linda Brown and Kathy McMullin, would later join the LPGA tour. Athletic programs continued at Edison until 1997 when intercollegiate athletics were discontinued at the college.

In the summer of 2013, Edison State College President, Dr. Jeff Allbritten, requested that a feasibility study be completed to provide an analysis of the factors involved in the College returning to sponsoring intercollegiate athletics. He further requested associated timelines to be considered if the decision is made to move forward with intercollegiate athletics.

A factor in Edison State College's return to intercollegiate athletics is that college sports would greatly enhance the overall student experience including residential opportunities and an student life program. One complaint verbalized by residential students is the "lack of stuff to do." Also the return to collegiate athletics gives both resident and commuter students the opportunity to become involved in another extra-curricular activity. Data show an increased graduation rate for students involved in sports (Inside Higher Ed.com October 25, 2013) and in extra-curricular activities.

Athletics presents challenges to the College including facilities, scholarships for student athletes, athletic personnel, and general athletic operating expenses (currently not part of the College's budget). These funds must be generated from a number of different sources.

A current and parallel initiative to considering the return of sports is the College's name change. The Edison State College Board of Trustees unanimously approved the new name, Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) at the September, 2013 meeting. Upon ratification by the Florida Legislature, the new name takes effect on July 1, 2014. A move to the return of athletic programs would become part of the new branding / marketing plan for the College.

National Junior College Athletic Association and Florida College System Activities Association

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

The NJCAA is the national governing organization for junior college athletics founded, in 1938 as an association of community and junior college athletic departments throughout the United States. The organization is divided into 24 geographic regions and sponsors championships in fifteen men's sports and thirteen women's sports.

NJCAA Geographic Regions



During 2012 – 2013, over 3600 teams participated in various sports with over 57,000 student-athletes competing. The State of Florida is its own region (Region 8).

Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA)

In addition to being governed by the NJCAA, athletic programs in the State College System of Florida are also part of the Florida College System Activities Association – Council for Athletic Affairs which has its headquarters in Tallahassee and is led by Executive Director, Jeb Blackburn. The Council for Athletic Affairs consists of a college representative appointed by the president from each FCSAA Intercollegiate Athletic Program for which eligibility is filed. There are 4 conferences in the State of Florida: the Panhandle, Mid-Florida, Suncoast, and Southern Conference.

There are 23 state and community colleges in the State of Florida that sponsor intercollegiate athletics. All of the institutions are members of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA). Twenty two institutions compete in Region 8 of the NJCAA and with the exception of Pasco Hernando Community College; the institutions compete as Division I members and are divided into 4 conferences throughout the State of Florida. Currently institutions sponsor between 3 and 9 sports with

twenty-two Division 1 institutions sponsoring baseball, women's basketball, and softball. Men's basketball has 18 teams and volleyball is sponsored by 15 schools. The table below lists the state and community college institutions as well as the sponsored sports.

The FCSAA consists of 4 conferences for competition purposes. The current structure of the FCSAA provides two viable options for Edison State College in terms of conference affiliation. When Edison previously sponsored intercollegiate athletics, it was a member of the Southern Conference which includes Broward, Eastern Florida State College, Indian River State College, Miami – Dade, and Palm Beach State College. The other conference option for Edison State College is the Suncoast Conference which includes State College of Florida, Hillsborough Community College, Polk State, St. Petersburg College, and South Florida State College.

Institution	Sports Sponsored													
	Total	M-Bsk	Base	M-Golf	M-Soc	M-Swim	W-Bsk	X-Coun	W-Golf	VB	FPSB	W-Swim	W-Soc	W-Tennis
Broward College	8	√	√		√		√			√	√		√	√
Chipola	5	√	√				√	√			√			
College of Central Florida	5	√	√				√			√	√			
Daytona State College	6	√	√				√		√	√	√			
Eastern Florida State College	9	√	√	√	√		√			√	√		√	√
FSC @ Jacksonville	6	√	√				√			√	√			√
Gulf Coast SC	5	√	√				√			√	√			
Hillsborough CC	6	√	√				√			√	√			√
Indian River State College	7	√	√			√	√			√	√	√		
Lake Sumter SC	3		√							√	√			
Miami - Dade College	5	√	√				√			√	√			
Northwest FL SC	4	√	√				√				√			
Palm Beach State College	5	√	√				√			√	√			
Pensacola State College	5	√	√				√			√	√			
Polk State College	5	√	√							√	√		√	
Santa Fe College	4	√	√				√				√			
Seminole State College	3		√						√		√			
South Florida SC	3		√							√	√			
St. Johns River SC	3		√							√	√			
St. Petersburg College	6	√	√				√			√	√			√
State College of FL - Manatee	5	√	√							√	√			√
Tallahassee CC	4	√	√				√				√			
Totals		18	22	1	2	1	16	1	2	17	22	1	3	6

Since all of the institutions in the Southern Conference have men's and women's basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball, it is anticipated ESC would sponsor the same 5 sports.

Title IX / Gender Equity

Introduction

This section addresses each of the components of the Title IX regulation and policy interpretation. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is federal legislation that bans discrimination based on gender, whether it is in academics or athletics, for institutions receiving Title IV funding. Edison State College receives Title IV funding and is required to comply with this legislation. While it is typically assumed that Title IX legislation applies only to athletics, it is but one of ten areas addressed in the law. These areas are: access to higher education, career education, education for pregnant and parenting students, employment, learning environment, math and science, sexual harassment, standardized testing, and technology. While collegiate athletics is the only area covered in this report, the reader is reminded that collegiate athletics is just a portion of the Title IX considerations for an institution.

Meeting / Exceeding Equal Opportunity and other Program Areas

Athletic Financial Assistance

A 1979 policy interpretation clarified the obligation that recipients of federal aid, under Title IX provisions must provide equal opportunities in athletic programs. In the area of athletic financial assistance, the 1979 policy interpretation states that – to be compliant with this provision – a college must “determine whether proportionally equal amounts of financial assistance (scholarship aid) are available to men’s and women’s athletic programs.” To measure the compliance with this standard, a college must divide the amounts of aid available by gender in the athletic program and compare to the overall student population of the institution.

As Edison State College considers reinstating intercollegiate athletics, the institution will have to determine which sports will be offered and how many scholarships in those sports will be awarded, to determine if the College will meet this first test of compliance with Title IX. Once these decisions have been made, a comparison with the actual student body will need to be made as well as constant monitoring of actual scholarships accepted and the actual number of student athletes who enroll (to determine if the test is met). Edison State College will need to monitor the allocation of athletic financial aid to stay within one percentage point of the ratio of male and female athletes, based on the number of all student athletes who receive athletic aid.

Accommodation of Athletic Interests and Abilities

To meet the second test of Title IX compliance, accommodation of athletic interests and abilities, there are three factors that must be considered. In 1979, the US Department of

Health, Education, and Welfare issued a policy interpretation for Title IX, including what has become known as the “three-prong test” of an institution’s compliance.

1. Prong 1 – Providing athletic participation opportunities that are substantially proportionate to the student enrollment, or
2. Prong 2 – Demonstrate a continual expansion of athletic opportunities for the underrepresented sex, or
3. Prong 3 – Full and effective accommodation of the interest and ability of underrepresented sex.

Recipients of federal funding can demonstrate compliance with Title IX by meeting any one of the three prongs.

1. To meet “proportionality”, (Prong 1) the level of participation opportunities for male and female students is provided in numbers substantially equal to their respective institution’s enrollment. Edison State College has 59.7% female undergraduate enrollment. To be compliant with prong one of proportionality, ESC would need to provide approximately 60% of athletic opportunities for females.
2. Since Edison State College would be just beginning to offer intercollegiate athletics, prong 2 may not be applicable as it includes “a history and continuing practice of program expansion.” Regardless, it should be stated that a comprehensive plan to reintroduce intercollegiate athletics over a period of several years would be included as part of a proactive stance for gender equity and Title IX.

The following are questions that committees ask when considering the second prong test and would guide Edison State over time:

- Over the last few years, has the institution added female teams?
- Has the school discontinued any female sports?
 - If yes, did the school cut each team because there truly weren’t enough female students who were interested or had the ability to play?
- Have females asked for any sports to be added?
 - If yes, did the school grant their requests?
 - If the school did not grant the requests, why not?
 - Do the reasons the school gave seem fair?
- Does the school have plans to add new sports for females?
- Does the school have any policies or procedures for deciding whether to add new sports?
 - If yes, do the same policies and procedures apply to males and females alike?
- Does the school have policies / procedures for finding out what sports females want to play?

Institutions must make good faith efforts to increase athletic participation opportunities for students who previously have been denied opportunities – usually females – either through the addition of teams or the addition of athletes to existing teams. These opportunities must be added in response to female students’ developing interest and abilities. It is anticipated that with the creation of a comprehensive plan involving athletics, Edison State College would be able to show compliance in this area.

3. To meet prong 3, ESC must demonstrate that the interests and abilities of the underrepresented gender has been fully accommodated – “where members of one sex are underrepresented among intercollegiate athletes and the institution cannot show a continuing practice of program expansion, whether it can be determined that the interest and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program.”

According to the “Dear Colleague Letter” (a letter from the delegated authority of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights dated March 18, 2005), an institution will be found in compliance with part three (prong 3) unless there exists a sport for the underrepresented sex with all three of the following conditions: (1) unmet interest sufficient to sustain a varsity team in the sport(s); (2) sufficient ability to sustain an intercollegiate team in the sport(s) and (3) reasonable expectation of intercollegiate competition for a team in the sport(s) within the school’s normal competitive region.”

Institutions could satisfy the third prong, “effectively accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex,” by conducting a student survey to show that the current program is accommodating the members of that gender. Given that Edison State College is just undertaking intercollegiate athletics, there will sufficient in future years to add sports at the appropriate levels for compliance.

Other Program Areas

The third test of Title IX compliance is in the eleven (11) “other program areas.” This requirement is that all other benefits, opportunities, and treatments afforded sports participants are to be equivalent, but not necessarily identical. If these eleven components are found to be equivalent, the institution is in compliance.

The eleven “other program areas” are:

1. Equipment and Supplies
2. Scheduling of games and practice time
3. Travel and per diem allowances
4. Opportunity to receive academic tutoring

5. Opportunity to receive coaching, assignment, and compensation
6. Locker rooms, practice, and competitive facilities
7. Medical and training facilities and services
8. Housing and dining facilities and services
9. Publicity
10. Recruitment of student-athletes
11. Support services

In establishing athletics, Edison State College will address these compliance areas ensuring equal opportunity including facilities, operating budgets, coaching and support staff, and competition schedules.

Fiscal Analysis

Introduction

This section provides Edison State College's projected fiscal position for an intercollegiate athletics program. So that an accurate fiscal analysis can be projected, the section makes assumptions based on anticipated sports and actual completion timeframes. Also included in are comparisons for both total revenue and total expenses for athletic departments, categorized by the state colleges in Florida that sponsor athletics.

Anticipated sports offered and beginning competition dates

For the purposes of this report, specific sports offerings are assumed for the first two years of intercollegiate athletics at Edison State College. A two year phase-in plan provides the College time to establish the athletic department, hire personnel including coaches, recruits student athletes, secure schedules and locate or establish temporary facilities for practice and competition. During the 2 year phase in, personnel can address the administrative issues necessary for athletic departments such as eligibility requirements, compliance with governing body rules and regulations, and allow time for building and implementing a comprehensive marketing plan.

For competition to begin in the fall of 2015 Edison State College will need to take several steps in the very near future. To increase the likelihood of successful implementation of an athletic department the College must hire an athletic director and coaches and begin recruiting student athletes. It is anticipated that in year one of implementation, Edison would sponsor men's and women's basketball and women's volleyball. All three of these sports are sponsored by a majority of the state colleges in Florida and the competition venue would likely be the same for all three sports. The College would then have an additional year in which to construct outdoor facilities for sports such as softball and baseball (or secure temporary locations for practices

and competition). These two sports could begin completion in fall of 2016. Staggering the beginning dates of the sports provides the College flexibility in generating start-up costs and personnel dollars, as well as latitude in facility construction and maintenance.

Operating Budget

As a comparison with other state colleges in Florida, the budget figures are presented in two major categories, operating and athletic-related student aid. All data presented in this chapter were obtained from The Equity in Athletics Data Analysis website produced by the Office of Postsecondary Education <http://ope.ed.gov/athletics/>. This website provides summary athletic data for all institutions of higher education in the US and is updated by the institutions on an annual basis.

Since state colleges in Florida currently offer three (3) to nine (9) sports, both operating budgets and student aid budgets vary widely. For comparisons to be applicable to Edison State College, the average per sport was used for each institution. Additionally, the operating budgets include salaries, recruiting expenses, administrative costs, game-day expenses (officials, rental, etc.), travel and meals.

Among the Florida state colleges, the range of operating budgets per sport is \$57,461 - \$356,516. For institutions in the Suncoast Conference, in which it is anticipated that Edison will compete, the range per sport is \$68,068 - \$188,752. The average operating budget per sport in the state college system is \$165,723 and the average operating per sport in the Suncoast Conference is \$139,485. A complete table of athletic information including budgets is included on the next page of this report.

For the first two years of implementation of the athletic department, it is anticipated that one-time funds will need to be allocated for start-up costs. These costs are for initial equipment purchases, technology, uniforms, practice items, etc. A realistic budget for these one-time expenses is approximately \$100,000 for each of the first two years.

Athletic-related Student Aid

Athletic-related student aid refers to the number of student athletes who receive an athletic grant-in-aid (scholarship) in recognition of their athletic ability provided that the student-athlete is admitted to the institution as a regular student. Additionally, the amount of the grant-in-aid and the number of grants-in-aid that may be awarded varies depending on the sport. The value of athletic grants-in-aid also is dependent on the financial aid definitions of institutional budgets which include tuition, fees, room, board, books, and travel one time to and from the institution in a direct route. The NJCAA and the FCSAA define the maximum

number of grants-in-aid that an institution may award per sport. Depending on the sport, the grant-in-aid may be distributed in part to different student-athletes.

If Edison State College begins the athletic program with men's and women's basketball and volleyball, the maximum number of grants-in-aid that may be awarded is forty-one. Men's basketball is permitted 12, women's basketball 15, and volleyball 14. There are a number of methods by which scholarships for these sports could be allocated and distributed. For example, during year one, half of the maximum scholarships could be awarded and in year two, the remainder could be allocated up to the maximum. Also, the total number of scholarships and the amount of the scholarships (in-state vs. out of state) will need to be determined. Distributing the allocation of scholarships over time will help offset a high initial cost to the College, with respect to athletic-related student aid.

If Edison adds softball and baseball in year two, the potential number of grants-in-aid rises to eighty-three (83) with softball's maximum being twenty-four (24) and baseball's maximum eighteen (18) full scholarships. It is not at all uncommon, and very typical, that scholarship limits in sports are imposed by individual institutions – which Edison may consider if this amount is financially infeasible. As stated, again, there are various ways to implement scholarship allocation, including the number and types of scholarships.

Athletic Department Comparisons

Institution	Location	Full - Time Enrollment	Sports	Conference	Athletically Related Student Aid	%	Avg. Aid per Sport	Total Annual Operating Expenses	%	Avg. Operating per Sport	Total Athletic Expenses
College of Central Florida	Ocala, FL	3,360	5	Mid-Florida	\$225,000	26.0%	\$45,000	\$638,949	74.0%	\$127,790	\$863,949
Daytona State College	Daytona Beach, FL	6,325	6	Mid-Florida	\$1,129,103	40.7%	\$188,184	\$1,643,991	59.3%	\$273,999	\$2,773,094
FSC @ Jacksonville	Jacksonville, FL	10,232	6	Mid-Florida	\$541,800	33.2%	\$90,300	\$1,087,893	66.8%	\$181,316	\$1,629,693
Lake Sumter SC	Leesburg, FL	1,454	3	Mid-Florida	\$205,139	29.8%	\$68,380	\$483,388	70.2%	\$161,129	\$688,527
Santa Fe College	Gainesville, FL	5,913	4	Mid-Florida	\$531,707	36.7%	\$132,927	\$915,464	63.3%	\$228,866	\$1,447,171
Seminole State College	Sanford, FL	7,638	3	Mid-Florida	\$227,298	24.5%	\$75,766	\$700,786	75.5%	\$233,595	\$928,084
St. Johns River SC	Palatka, FL	2,267	3	Mid-Florida	\$207,397	38.0%	\$69,132	\$338,846	62.0%	\$112,949	\$546,243
Chipola	Marianna, FL	978	5	Panhandle	\$770,917	44.5%	\$154,183	\$960,913	55.5%	\$192,183	\$1,731,830
Gulf Coast SC	Panama City, FL	2,384	5	Panhandle	\$702,194	32.6%	\$140,439	\$1,449,180	67.4%	\$289,836	\$2,151,374
Northwest FL SC	Niceville, FL	2,515	4	Panhandle	\$634,191	49.9%	\$158,548	\$636,674	50.1%	\$159,169	\$1,270,865
Pensacola State College	Pensacola, FL	4,365	5	Panhandle	\$493,891	30.7%	\$98,778	\$1,112,529	69.3%	\$222,506	\$1,606,420
Tallahassee CC	Tallahassee, FL	7,292	4	Panhandle	\$817,800	55.5%	\$204,450	\$657,029	44.5%	\$164,257	\$1,474,829
Broward College	Fort Lauderdale, FL	13,133	8	Southern	\$487,145	35.2%	\$60,893	\$898,328	64.8%	\$112,291	\$1,385,473
Eastern Florida State College	Cocoa, FL	6,271	9	Southern	\$540,519	51.1%	\$60,058	\$517,150	48.9%	\$57,461	\$1,057,669
Indian River State College	Fort Pierce, FL	5,671	7	Southern	\$795,765	51.7%	\$113,681	\$743,632	48.3%	\$106,233	\$1,539,397
Miami - Dade College	Miami, FL	26,174	5	Southern	\$379,662	17.6%	\$75,932	\$1,782,580	82.4%	\$356,516	\$2,162,242
Palm Beach State College	Lake Worth, FL	10,576	5	Southern	\$670,194	53.7%	\$134,039	\$577,258	46.3%	\$115,452	\$1,247,452
Hillsborough CC	Tampa, FL	11,693	6	Suncoast	\$214,760	34.5%	\$35,793	\$408,410	65.5%	\$68,068	\$623,170
Polk State College	Winter Haven, FL	3,670	5	Suncoast	\$232,630	22.3%	\$46,526	\$808,671	77.7%	\$161,734	\$1,041,301
South Florida SC	Avon Park, FL	989	3	Suncoast	\$340,360	44.9%	\$113,453	\$417,680	55.1%	\$139,227	\$758,040
St. Petersburg College	St. Petersburg, FL	9,762	6	Suncoast	\$540,893	39.2%	\$90,149	\$837,862	60.8%	\$139,644	\$1,378,755
State Col. of FL - Manatee	Bradenton, FL	4,622	5	Suncoast	\$495,072	34.4%	\$99,014	\$943,758	65.6%	\$188,752	\$1,438,830
Averages		6,695	5		\$508,338	37.6%	\$99,852	\$843,681	62.4%	\$165,723	\$1,352,019
Conference Institutions											
Hillsborough CC	Tampa, FL	11,693	6	Suncoast	\$214,760	34.5%	\$35,793	\$408,410	65.5%	\$68,068	\$623,170
Polk State College	Winter Haven, FL	3,670	5	Suncoast	\$232,630	22.3%	\$46,526	\$808,671	77.7%	\$161,734	\$1,041,301
South Florida SC	Avon Park, FL	989	3	Suncoast	\$340,360	44.9%	\$113,453	\$417,680	55.1%	\$139,227	\$758,040
St. Petersburg College	St. Petersburg, FL	9,762	6	Suncoast	\$540,893	39.2%	\$90,149	\$837,862	60.8%	\$139,644	\$1,378,755
State Col. of FL - Manatee	Bradenton, FL	4,622	5	Suncoast	\$495,072	34.4%	\$99,014	\$943,758	65.6%	\$188,752	\$1,438,830
Averages for Conference Institutions		6,147	5		\$364,743	34.8%	\$76,987	\$683,276	65.2%	\$139,485	\$1,048,019

Personnel and Support System Considerations

Athletic personnel and support systems for athletic departments are major considerations in developing an intercollegiate athletic program at Edison State College. A recommendation is for initial athletic personnel to have multiple responsibilities. This practice could change once the department grows to a size that makes it feasible and adding personnel is warranted. The personnel for a new athletic department can be hired throughout the implementation phase, depending on the skill sets of the candidates and the timeframe for beginning athletic competition.

It is essential to bring a full-time athletic director on board as soon as possible. The athletic director will be responsible for all aspects of building the athletic department including staffing, establishing policies and procedures, working with coaches to generate schedules, securing facilities and, fundraising responsibilities in coordination with the Edison State College Foundation. It is reasonable that the athletic director could also serve as a member of the coaching staff in the new athletic department (a model used at a number of other state colleges in Florida).

A second essential member of a newly formed athletic department is an administrative coordinator. One of the major areas of responsibility for athletic departments is ensuring accountability and compliance (with the many rules, policies and procedures for both the athletic department and for the eligibility of student-athletes). Responsibilities assigned to this position may be handled by part-time positions and as the department grows transitions to become full-time or may require additional part-time assistance. Members of the athletic department staff, as outlined in their job duties and responsibilities, can facilitate these functions.

As the department hires coaches and the process of recruiting student-athletes begins, there will be a need for an athletic trainer who will oversee the daily operations and coordinate the medical services for the athletic department. These processes and procedures must be established and services must be in place when student-athletes arrive on campus to begin their intercollegiate experience. Again as the department increases the number of sports, the number of athletic trainers will need to increase. As in most athletic departments, additional support personnel, including athletic trainers, are supplemented by using interns and / or graduate assistants as part of the staffing plan.

Other support for the athletic department includes sports information / social media, marketing / promotions, academic tutoring and support, and strength and conditioning. The overall size of the coaching staff for each sport is an on-going consideration as well. As the program begins, it is recommended that these positions be part-time and assigned multiple

areas of responsibilities. Anticipated salaries and specific duties for athletic department positions are included in the recommendations section of this report.

Facilities

Introduction

There are no athletic facilities currently on any of the three Edison State College campuses. This need is a major item to be addressed for the long term sustainability and success of an athletic program. There are several options for an athletic program as the planning and building of athletic facilities begins. In order to be able to attract high quality student-athletes and athletic personnel, facilities will play a major part of the recruiting process.

Off – Campus Facilities

A strategy for beginning athletic competition, as early as fall 2015, is to secure an off-campus facility to use in the short-term for competition. During the initial implementation of athletics at Edison State College, high schools and other recreation facilities in the Southwest Florida area that are possibilities for competition. Informal discussions have occurred pertaining to the use of facilities and these types of conversations may lead to more formal proposals in the near future.

On-Campus Facilities

The gymnasium at the Lee campus was converted to classroom space when the athletics program was disbanded in the late 1990s. The College has two options in terms of creating a venue that would house basketball and volleyball. The first option is to use the existing facility by returning it to its original purpose - a gymnasium. Initial estimates for such a conversion (which would include competition surface, HVAC, seating, lighting, locker rooms and staff offices) would be in the approximately \$2 million – \$2.5 million dollars. Actual cost of renovation could be higher depending on the desired outcome. Since the building is over 35 years old, any major renovation would include ADA compliance, making this option less cost effective.

Other options are to build a new gymnasium as part of a comprehensive student recreation facility or build a venue for athletic competition only. Both of these options could be completed so that the athletic venue is ready for completion in less time than constructing the comprehensive recreation facility. Regardless, the College will need to designate temporary space for conditioning, weight training, and athletic training services on campus. To build a gym for athletic competition, stand-alone or as part of a larger recreation facility, is estimated to cost somewhere between \$3 - \$5 million.

If the implementation of the athletic department proceeds as recommended, both a softball and baseball facility will need to be constructed. Rough estimates on building these facilities (which would include the actual playing surface, dugouts, press box, seating, and lighting) are \$300,000 - \$400,000 for softball (seating 300 – 450) and \$700,000 – \$950,000 for baseball (seating 500 – 750), depending on a number of factors such as surface, drainage, dirt, grading, fencing, irrigation, and others. If such facilities are constructed, it is recommended that initial plans include the possibility for expansion as the need arises.

Timeline for Implementation of Intercollegiate Athletics

The timeline is critical to the successful implementation of the intercollegiate athletics program. The two options for implementation are to begin competition in fall 2014 or fall 2015, with a staggered implementation of sports. A phased implementation provides the College the opportunity to identify resources and plan for a successful launch of each sport. External factors, such as fundraising and community involvement can alter the recommended time schedule.

To begin competition in any sports for fall 2014, hiring a full-time athletic director should be completed by January 2014. This aggressive timeline allows only a narrow window of opportunity to identify a high quality athletic administrator who would be willing to relocate and begin a new position. The athletic director would immediately need to identify and recruit coaches for the sports that would begin in the fall and winter months. Those sports are volleyball and men's and women's basketball. In this scenario, volleyball season is finished and a majority of coaching changes already been completed for the 2014 season, another disadvantage.

In a six to eight month window, before completion begins in fall 2014, the athletic director would need to establish all athletic policies and procedures, hire coaching staffs, have coaches recruit athletes to begin school in the fall, develop competition schedules, identify and contract with facilities for practice and competition, as well as build the relationships at Edison with students, faculty, and staff for the athletics program.

There are external factors that are involved in the narrow time frame as well that must be considered. The NJCAA has a 1 year probationary membership year which includes no post season competition for any institutions in their initial year of membership. While Edison is in the process of joining the NJCAA for the 2014 – 2015 year, having competing teams is not a factor in the initial post season ban. So if the athletic teams at Edison begin in the fall 2015, they would be eligible for post season play since the initial membership year is 2014 – 2015.

Trying to begin competition in fall of 2014 reduces the opportunity for the College to capitalize on a highly visible community program. In addition to all of the internal and administrative

responsibilities that must be addressed, a comprehensive marketing and recruiting plan should be developed to further enhance the College and the athletic program.

For athletic teams to begin completion in the fall of 2015, the timeframe would be much more flexible and would provide time for programs to work through the challenges that new athletic programs face. While it is still recommended that an athletic director be hired in early 2014, there is flexibility in finding a high quality candidate that has experience in athletic administration and understands the needs of a newly formed athletic program.

A phased approach to beginning the athletic program in 2015 provides many advantages for Edison State College. The initial year of competition can feature roughly half of the anticipated scholarships, with the other half being available in the second year. This timeframe greatly reduces the initial costs of beginning the athletic program and provides the College additional time to identify funding sources, create and reach fundraising goals, build anticipation of the expanding intercollegiate athletic program, and provide a workable timetable to meet the needs of the student-athletes.

The initial few months would provide the opportunity to identify quality coaches in fall of 2014 and to hire those coaches after that sport season is over. In this timeframe, coaches would have time to build their individual programs without the burden of developing a schedule, recruiting student-athletes, securing equipment and facilities and begin coaching / practicing within just a few weeks.

Recommendations

Edison State College is considering a return to intercollegiate athletics. Due to current Florida statute, Edison will compete in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) within the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) upon initiating sports. Edison will need to join the NJCAA, but is already a dues paying member of the FCSAA.

Based on this feasibility report and comparisons with the twenty-two state colleges who sponsor athletics in Florida, it is recommended that Edison State College sponsor intercollegiate athletics. It is further recommended that Edison begin sports fall 2015.

General Recommendations

As a first step, Edison State College should create an Athletics Implementation Taskforce. The purpose of this taskforce is to receive this feasibility study and to make recommendations to the President for implementation of intercollegiate athletics. The committee membership will include the following members:

- Dr. Jeff Stewart – facilitator
- Student Affairs Representative
- Faculty Representative
- Staff Representative
- Cabinet Representative
- Foundation Representative
- Financing Corporation Representative
- Board of Trustee Representative
- Alumni Representative
- 2 At-large community Representatives
- 2 Student Representatives

The initial meeting of this taskforce will be in late November or early December 2013 and the purpose will be to receive the charge of the taskforce, share the feasibility study, and to allow members to ask any questions. The President and selected staff will be available to answer questions and provide additional information.

A second meeting will be scheduled for February, 2014 which will include a final implementation recommendation, with timelines, suggestions, and budget endorsed by the task force.

The final meeting in April 2014 will provide suggestions of working committees for moving forward for athletics, fundraising, facilities, booster club organization, and search committees.

Conference Affiliation

The current structure of the FCSAA provides two viable options for Edison State College in terms of conference affiliation: Southern or Suncoast. Edison was a member of the Southern Conference which includes Broward, Eastern Florida State College, Indian River State College, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach State College. The average travel distance from Edison to these institutions is 165 miles with the closest being 134 miles and the farthest being 240 miles. The other conference option, is the Suncoast Conference, includes State College of Florida, Hillsborough Community College, Polk State, St. Petersburg College, and South Florida State College. A majority of these institutions are located on the west coast of Florida and the

average travel distance is 114 miles with the closest being 94 miles and the farthest being 138 miles.

In reviewing sports sponsored by both conference institutions compared to the initial direction for Edison State College athletic program, along with the significant travel implications, it is recommended that Edison seek conference affiliation in the Suncoast Conference. Joining the Suncoast Conference does not preclude Edison from competing against any of the other teams in the State of Florida, as part of a typical schedule of events. It is anticipated that a majority of sport schedules will include completion against other Florida institutions.

Sports Sponsorship Recommendations

Starting an intercollegiate athletic program is a significant step for any institution of higher education and Edison State College is no different in that regard. While the college enjoys a good reputation for its former sports program, it none-the-less is beginning with no current infrastructure. To build a quality program, there should exist a clearly articulated plan of action with specific outcomes, keeping the focus on the goals of the College – one goal of which is to offer a more robust student life program. It is recommended that the sports that will be sponsored by Edison State College be phased in over a two year period, with the athletic-related student aid phased in over a three year period.

The 2015 – 2016 year, Edison would begin the volleyball and men's and women's basketball programs. Distribution of the full number of scholarships which is to be determined, can be made over a 2 year period. This phase in provides for flexibility for funding and recruiting quality student-athletes for each of the sports that are sponsored.

During the 2016 – 2017 year, Edison would add softball and baseball, again using half of the anticipated scholarships for those particular sports. The rest of the scholarships would be available to these two sports during 2017 – 2018. For volleyball and basketball, the number of scholarships would increase to their full allotment per sport in 2016 – 2017, their second year of existence.

Fiscal Resource Recommendations

As with any athletic department, the financial resources allocated are a major factor in determining the success of the athletic program. There are 3 major areas of financial need that athletic departments require to function. They are salaries, operating budgets, and athletic-related student aid.

Salaries

One advantage of a phased approach for athletic programs is that new positions will be created at different times over multiple years, thus providing flexibility in a funding timeline. The salary recommendations in this report are a result of discussions with athletic directors in the FCSAA and salary information from athletic departments obtained from Edison's Office of Human Resources.

The athletic director will lead the athletic department and it is recommended that this position report to the Vice President of Research, Technology, and Accountability (at least initially). This position is responsible for the day to day operations of the entire athletic program. He / she supervises the head coaches in each sport, ensures accountability and compliance with rules and eligibility requirements including Title IX, the NJCAA, and FCSAA and serves as the representative of the athletic department in the community. In the FCSAA there are a number of different models for the athletic director position and reporting structure, so there is not one specific model that is required or suggested. It is recommended that Edison State College hire an athletic director early in 2014 with a salary range of \$72,500 - \$80,000. It is expected that this range would attract a highly qualified candidate with athletic administration experience who will be able to build the systems that will serve as the foundation of the athletic program.

Two other critical athletic administrative positions, created as appropriate by the athletic director, are administrative coordinator and head athletic trainer. The administrative coordinator would assist the athletic director in policy creation, eligibility requirements, budgeting, and other areas of administrative oversight for the entire athletic program. A recommended range for this position is \$38,500 - \$44,500. The head athletic trainer is responsible for preventing, evaluating, treating, and rehabilitating athletic related injuries for the intercollegiate athletic program. The requirements for such a position include a master's degree in a relevant field, NATA certification, and CPR certification. The salary range for this position should be between \$47,500 and \$58,500.

Once the athletic director is hired and a more specific timeline is generated, the process of hiring coaches will need to begin. While there is slight variation among head coaching salaries in the FCSAA, typically the salary range for head coaches is \$44,000 - \$60,000. The exception to that range may be in basketball where the range may extend to \$65,000.

It is recommended that each of the team sports have at least one full-time assistant coach. In addition to serving as the recruiting coordinator for his / her respective sport, the assistant coach would assist with on-the-court coaching, practice planning, academic progress, and scouting opponents. Recommended salary range for assistant coaches is \$28,000 - \$39,000, depending on experience and qualifications. Additionally, it is expected that volunteer

assistants may be interested in working as members of coaching staffs in order to gain college level experience.

For additional positions, such as sports information, strength and conditioning, and other administrative positions, it is recommended to explore avenues with Florida Gulf Coast University to determine the feasibility of creating graduate assistant positions for the Edison athletic program. These positions would be focused in a specific area at Edison while the student seeks a graduate degree through Florida Gulf Coast - yet another unique opportunity to leverage the resources in Southwest Florida.

Operating Funds

In addition to salaries, athletic departments must have operational budgets that allow them to be competitive with peer institutions. In reviewing the institutions that currently compete in the Suncoast conference, the operating expenses for athletic departments range from \$408,410 to \$943,758. It should be noted that while these figures are reported by the institutions, some include salaries as part of operational budgets and others do not. Also, these figures vary widely due to the number of sports each institution sponsors. In an attempt to make the operating numbers more meaningful, the table below reflects the institution, number of sports sponsored, operating expenses and the amount spent per sport.

Institution Name	# of Sports	Total Operating Budget	Operating Budget per sport
Hillsboro Community	6	\$408,410	\$68,068
Polk State College	5	\$808,671	\$161,734
South Florida State	3	\$417,680	\$139,227
State College of Florida	5	\$943,758	\$188,752
St. Petersburg	6	\$837,862	\$139,644
AVERAGES	5	\$683,276	\$139,485

It is recommended that the operational budgets of each of the team sports will be approximately \$155,000 per sport including the salaries of the head coach and full-time assistant coach. Included as part of the operational budgets is recruiting, travel, equipment, uniforms, officials, postage / mailings, administrative costs, events management, sport specific promotions and general operations. As part of the start-up phase for each of the sports, it is recommended that the athletic department have \$100,000 per year for the first two years to offset the initial costs of fielding teams and purchasing equipment (such as athletic training supplies) to get the program operational. Once the programs are established, each of the sports will incorporate these reoccurring costs within their budgets.

Anticipated budget when fully operational

Athletic Department – Continuing Budget (5 recommended Sports)	Amount
Administrative Salaries*	\$183,000
Administrative Operating Budget	\$50,000
Sports Specific Operating Budget – Total Operating	\$780,000
Total	\$1,013,000

The budget projections in the table above reflect the anticipated operating costs of the athletic department. As estimates, these projections are subject to change. It should be noted that not all sports will have the exact same needs and that these budgets are a general guideline.

Athletic-related Student Aid

As part of viable athletic programs, the number of scholarships that are available to recruit and retain quality student-athletes is essential to be competitive. The NJCAA defines a grant-in-aid as an award to any student-athlete in recognition of his / her athletic ability provided the student-athlete is admitted to the institution as a regular student. Grants-in-aids are limited to a maximum of:

1. Tuition and Fees
2. Room and Board
3. Required course-related books and up to \$250 in course required supplies per academic year, provided such course supplies are required of all students in the course and specified in the institutions catalog or course syllabus.

At most institutions the number of grants-in-aid are distributed to more student athletes than the actual number of grants-in-aid, depending on the sport and the number of grants-in-aid available. Not all student-athletes receive a full grant-in-aid as defined above. The costs for the actual grant-in-aid must be defined by the College. Certain auxiliary operations will be impacted such as the cafeteria which currently does not offer meal plans.

The following table contains the maximum number of grants-in- aid allowed by the NJCAA and the recommended number that Edison State should offer once the athletic program is fully operational. It is recommended that in year 1 of all sports, half of the recommended grants – in – aid be available for award.

Recommended Grants – In – Aid

Sport	Maximum # of Grants – In - Aid	Recommended # for award
Volleyball	14	8
Men's Basketball	12	12
Women's Basketball	15	15
Softball	24	15
Baseball	18	15

The recommended total of 65 grants-in-aid would place Edison at or near the top compared to the other state colleges in Florida once the athletic department is fully operational. In the first year of competition Edison would provide 17.5 grants-in-aid (volleyball – 4, men’s basketball – 6, and women’s basketball – 7.5). In year 2 of competition, the initial 3 sports would increase to the recommended levels of funding while softball and baseball would have half of the number of grants-in-aid available. The third year of competition (FY 2017) would be the first time that Edison State’s athletic program will offer the total 65 grants-in-aid.

Due to the varying costs of a grant-in-aid, it is nearly impossible to put dollar figures with these numbers since a student-athlete from out of state would have a much different amount than a student-athlete from Florida. With that in mind, it is recommended that (as practice), approximately 75% of the grants-in-aid overall be awarded to student-athletes from Florida. There are a high number of quality student-athletes from Florida and this practice will help in keeping expenses lower for the athletic program and reward state residence. This practice is similar to many other state colleges in Florida.

Athletic Facilities

The lack of any athletic facilities on campus is one of the major challenges of producing a competitive athletic program at Edison State College. This challenge can also be turned into a positive for two reasons. First, there are a number of athletic facilities in Lee County, Florida that could serve as a temporary home for the Edison State College athletic teams. This option provides the opportunity for Edison State to move forward with the athletic program development while exploring, planning and constructing athletic facilities on campus.

The second reason the current lack of facilities can be seen as a positive opportunity for the creation of brand new athletic facilities. An arena can be part of a bigger plan to create a comprehensive student activities / recreation facility similar, to what a number of institutions have done in the past 5 – 10 years. This type of facility would address the President’s stated goal to build a comprehensive experience for students on campus at Edison and would provide athletic teams who compete indoors a newly designed and constructed facility in which to compete.

Facilities that house both the baseball and softball team should be constructed on campus based on the space that is available for improvement. Having facilities on campus will provide a much greater opportunity to recruit student – athletes, build student and community support, and have a well – rounded experience for the Edison State College Community.