

BOARD OF REGENTS

BRIEFING PAPER

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Request for Student Athletic Fee_____

MEETING DATE: December 4-5, 2024 _____

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Nevada State University is launching an athletics department to enhance the student experience, foster community engagement, and support the state's expanding identity as a hub for sports and entertainment. Establishing an athletics program aligns with student demand for a more vibrant campus life and addresses the broader educational and developmental needs of students by promoting physical wellness, team spirit, and school pride.

For additional background, please refer to the presentation provided at the June 6-7, 2024 quarterly meeting ([Athletics, NSU Ref. BOR-31](#)).

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Nevada State University requests approval for a \$9 per credit hour student athletics fee to initiate its athletics program with two sports: Women's Flag Football and Men's Track and Field. This fee will provide the foundational funding required to launch and sustain the program while developing a state-of-the-art health and fitness space for all students.

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

Establishing an athletics program is essential to the continued growth and appeal of Nevada State University. As Nevada increasingly becomes a sports and entertainment destination, students in the region need access to collegiate athletic options to compete and grow in this evolving landscape. With a rising interest in women's sports and community calls for enhanced student life experiences, launching these initial sports programs will support student needs, drive campus engagement, and enhance Nevada State's contribution to regional athletic and educational growth.

5. CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- ☒ Access (Increase access to higher education)
- ☒ Success (Improve student success)
- ☒ Close Institutional Performance Gaps
- ☐ Workforce (Meet workforce needs in Nevada)
- ☐ Research (Increase solutions-focused research)
- ☐ Coordination, Accountability, and Transparency (Ensure system coordination, accountability, and transparency)
- ☐ Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

6. INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

The student athletics fee will provide critical resources to support athletic, and health and fitness initiatives that improve student success and well-being. Athletics can foster a stronger sense of belonging, support mental and physical health, and increase student engagement, directly contributing to academic persistence and overall student satisfaction. Additionally, the program will address regional workforce needs by promoting physical education and providing opportunities for students interested in sports management, health, and recreational and fitness fields.

7. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- Surveys from academic year 2020, 2022, and 2024 indicate strong student support for athletics and an athletics fee at Nevada State University.

- Establishing an athletics program enhances the college experience, contributing to a vibrant and connected campus culture.
- Women's Flag Football is a growing sport in the Clark County School District (CCSD), yet no collegiate team currently exists in Nevada, positioning Nevada State as a leader in advancing women's athletics.
- Men's Track and Field is similarly unavailable at the collegiate level within the state, providing Nevada State an opportunity to fill this gap and attract new students.
- A portion of the fee will fund a health and fitness space, featuring a walking track, yoga and meditation rooms, and nutrition awareness resources, supporting holistic student wellness.
- The athletics program will strengthen community ties by engaging the Henderson community and creating a shared sense of pride and support for Nevada State.

8. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- Concerns about additional financial burdens on students due to the new fee.
- Questions regarding the necessity of athletics at Nevada State and its impact on academic focus.

9. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

- Nevada State University could defer the development of athletics, though this would limit its ability to meet student and community needs, and disappointed the student population who overwhelmingly supported this opportunity.
- Continued solicitation of sponsors for financial support, though this approach may lack the sustainability and consistency of a student-funded model.

10. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE:

The Chancellor's Office recommends approval.

11. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- ☐ Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- ☐ Amends Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- ☒ Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # 7 Section # 11
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No x
- Explain: The proposal generates additional revenues

Nevada State University

Request for a Student Athletic Fee

Since the inception of Nevada State University, there have been plans and conversations to develop an athletics program. For the past five years, athletics in Nevada and across the country has significantly grown as has the attention on women in sports. With the addition of many professional teams in recent years, Nevada has become the sports and entertainment capital of the world. As a state institution, Nevada State will be a valuable and viable option to many student athletes who would like to continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level while staying close to home. Nevada State will thoughtfully build an athletic program starting with two sports, Women's Flag Football and Men's Track and Field.

For additional background, please refer to the presentation provided at the June 6-7, 2024 quarterly meeting ([Athletics, NSU Ref. BOR-31](#)).

Student Involvement

Since 2019, each NSSA President has asked for updated information or progress regarding sports at Nevada State. In 2020, working collaboratively with NSSA, we surveyed students regarding their views about sports on campus. Students responded they wanted to see athletics at Nevada State, and they identified the sports they wanted on campus. In 2022, we surveyed students again asking which sports they'd like to see on campus and gauged their support of an athletic fee to support this effort. 81% of students surveyed support athletics and would attend a home game and 73% supported an athletic fee. In June 2024, our NSSA President and Vice President participated in our presentation to the Board of Regents regarding our path to athletics providing a voice for students and their desires to have sports at Nevada State. Since that presentation, students were surveyed (n=437) at the beginning of the fall semester regarding sports and an athletic fee. 83% of students surveyed support athletics on campus. When asked about a student athletic fee, 67% supported a \$9 per credit hour athletic fee; the other 33% supported a higher athletic fee. We held multiple drop-in focus groups with signage across campus inviting students to attend and learn more about the athletic fee and athletics. To increase feedback, we had social media blitzes, weekly tabling, meetings with NSSA leadership, and sent an official email from the Vice President of Student Affairs seeking their input regarding a proposed athletic fee.

Expenditures

The projected revenues of \$648,000 will cover the operating costs (\$540,000) of having the athletics/sports programs while the residual \$100,000 collected fees will be directed toward a full-service health and fitness, and recreation space that will include a state-of-the-art weight room with rooms for classes (yoga, meditation, nutrition classes), and a walking track. The remaining revenues will be for the operations costs for athletics. Intercollegiate Women's Flag Football is not available at most institutions in the west. Travel costs will be one of the largest expenditures as most intercollegiate teams are in Florida, Georgia, and Kansas. Additional costs include renting space for practice and competitions as well as equipment, uniforms, supplies, staff, and officials.

PROPOSED REVISIONS – *PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES MANUAL*

CHAPTER 7, SECTIONS 11

Fees and Tuition

Additions appear in ***boldface italics***; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 11. Student Fees

A. STANDARD STUDENT FEES

The following student fees have been reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents (institutions may charge up to the amount approved).

<u>Description</u>	<u>UNLV</u>	<u>UNR</u>	<u>NSU</u>	<u>CSN</u>	<u>GBC</u>	<u>TMCC</u>	<u>WNC</u>
...							
Athletics and Recreation Fee (per credit)	N/A	N/A	<i>9.00</i> [N/A]	2.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
...							