

# **U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Division I Track and Field Strategic Plan**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To Make the Sport of NCAA Division I Track & Field More Valuable and More Valued.

## **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

For the sport of Division I Collegiate Track and Field to continue to develop into a more valued experience in the NCAA sports community, it is important that we continue to broaden our appeal to the overall sporting audience.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Track and Field is the oldest, purest, and most diverse sport in the NCAA. The student-athletes who participate represent the core values espoused by the NCAA and its member institutions: academic integrity, social responsibility, gender and racial diversity, competitive excellence, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The athletes learn valuable life lessons from the rigorous training and head to head competition while being taught and motivated by professionally qualified coaches and administrators.

The purpose of this document is to identify the essential components of this sport-whose athletic elements are the foundation of all other sports.

### **What is the sport of track and field and what essential components identify track and field athletes?**

The sport of track and field aligns perfectly with the mission of NCAA Division I Athletics.

- Our Participants:
  - Represent both men and women.
  - Are racially diverse.
  - Represent a wide range of body types.
- Our sport demands a wide range of athletic aptitude: speed, strength, stamina, suppleness, and skill (coordination).
- Our events are full of drama for both the individuals and teams competing.
- Our sport is founded upon the most basic physical principles: run, jump, throw.
- Our competition is pure: individual vs. individual (*one on one, man vs. man*), while taking place in the context of a team scoring background.
- Our sport is a full spectrum, from youth to the Olympic Games.
- Our sport teaches life lessons that transcend their time in the sport.
- Our sport creates great athletes and heroes.
- Our sport epitomizes the nation's goal of promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Our sport stands at the forefront of promoting and demanding a drug-free sport.

## **I. THE IDENTITY OF DIVISION I TRACK AND FIELD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- A. To create a consensus of what events in the sport constitute a standardized track and field meet.
- B. To clarify what constitutes a successful track performance or contest (e.g. individual winning an event, team winning scoring contest, individual record performance, high level individual

performance, achieving qualifying mark, entertaining event presentation/featuring exceptional athletes or coaching legends going head to head, etc.).

- C. To standardize the format of a track and field meet that will include a presentation of the 'main event' that does not exceed two-and-one-half (2.5) hours.
- D. To highlight the qualities and characteristics of these student-athletes and promote them to the general population.
- E. To portray those student-athletes as role models for healthy living and leverage that fact in a campaign to fight obesity, heart disease and diabetes.
- F. To celebrate the competitive diversity of our student-athletes and the events in which they compete by highlighting the inherent drama at a track and field meet.
- G. To showcase this sport through entertaining, action-packed, fast-moving, and relevant meets that are valuable to the general public and media outlets.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. Standardize what constitutes an entertaining track and field presentation and market the events for public consumption (event attendance, newspaper, TV, internet, etc.)

**TIME LINE** – Phased in over a three year period;

First Year – Draft and propose legislation that will outline what constitutes a standardized DI NCAA track and field 'Main Event' meet. Include legislation as to how it may fit into the individual programs outdoor track and field season.

Second Year – Encourage all programs to host and/or attend at least two 'Main Event' meets during their outdoor track and field season.

Third Year - Implementation of compulsory compliance to the legislation beginning with the 2012 NCAA track season.

- B. Direct the USTFCCCA to create a document validating the assumptions and statements made about track and field student-athletes (e.g. GPAs, overall graduation rates, social-economic backgrounds, life expectancy, influences on society, etc.).

**TIME LINE** – Material circulated to the USTFCCCA members in advance of the 2010 convention.

- C. Retain a professional to:

- 1) Identify leaders in the health care industry who are interested in using track and field student-athletes as examples of the benefits of healthy living.
- 2) Influence decision makers to appreciate and value the characteristics of these great physical specimens.
- 3) Enlist academic and NCAA leaders to support the mission of increasing the popularity and value of track and field.
- 4) Seek institutional funding to support the mission.
- 5) Persuade university presidents and the NCAA leadership to fund "starting positions" for the sport of cross country/track and field.

- 6) Create a platform and budgetary support to conduct, promote, and market Division I track and field programs.

**TIME LINE** – Immediate implementation based on available funding from the USTFCCCA.

## **II. THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- A. To preserve and enhance the student-athlete experience by promoting the values of honesty and integrity through meaningful competitive opportunities in track and field.
- B. To achieve fair and honest opportunities for all student-athletes to compete.
- C. To develop a more defined “team” experience.
- D. To create more visible events and more significant student-athlete recognition opportunities.
- E. To encourage promotion of our athletes through fan friendly competitions. A two and one half (2.5) hour main event competition allows for easy promotion of the events and student-athlete achievement.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. Create a national descending order list database.
  - Track and verify all performances for every athlete
  - Use for entry into all NCAA sanctioned events
  - Use as a media reference
- B. Develop a code of ethics for coaches and athletes.
- C. Develop a strategy to aggressively promote and demand a drug-free sport.
- D. Create a more specific definition of “team” in our sport.
- E. Work to increase the percentage of countable coaches to match national averages across all sports.
- F. Legislate more team scored events.

## **III. PROFESSIONALISM STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- A. To enhance the professionalism of NCAA Division I Collegiate track and field coaches as it relates to their institution, their student athletes, and their professional colleagues.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. To produce educational experiences and materials that raise awareness of coaches’ responsibilities to their institution as it relates to workday management, workplace organization, and financial accountability.

- B. To produce educational experiences and materials that raise awareness of coaches' responsibilities to their student athletes as it relates to their safety and well-being, to an environment and culture that promotes the development of character and leadership, to demonstrated knowledge of the sport, to practice planning and organization, to meet operation, and to team travel.
- C. To produce educational experiences and materials that raise awareness of coaches' responsibilities to their colleagues as it relates to encouraging active participation in the Coaches' Association, to attendance at Convention and professional meetings, and to willingly sharing information related to salary, benefits, budget, and other areas related to the conduct of our sport.
- D. To implement and embrace a "Code of Ethics."
- E. To promote, protect, and support individual members and the Track and Field programs of member institutions.
- F. To promote drug-free sport.

#### **IV. THE ECONOMICS OF NCAA DIVISION I TRACK AND FIELD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- A. To demonstrate that a NCAA Division I track and field program is a viable and valuable commodity, in which the program consistently generates revenue and produces a cost efficient product.
- B. To demonstrate that the Division I institution benefits from all investment and that the dividends are consistently positive.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. Demonstrate the ethnic and gender diversity of track and field as a positive model within the institution.
- B. Demonstrate academic achievement of the track and field teams as it relates to APR and GPA as a positive model within the institution.
- C. Demonstrate the value of the institution's track and field program relative to the cost of the investment.
- D. Create opportunities for programs to host Home competitions that can foster local and regional interest, cut travel costs, and create equity.
- E. Connect program with community to foster growth, support, and investment for the sport.
- F. Develop a financially viable method for teams to qualify for championship participation.