

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Intercollegiate Athletics
Strategic Plan
2008-2011



APRIL 2009

**Northern Illinois University
Department of Intercollegiate Athletics**

MISSION

*We develop **CHAMPIONS** in the classroom, in competition, and in life.*

VISION

Huskie Athletics strives to be a premier program centered on the student-athlete experience of academic, athletic and personal excellence while serving as an integral component of University life, promoting school spirit, and providing quality entertainment.

VALUES

***R**epresent NIU with pride*

***E**xpect success*

***D**emand integrity*

Strategic Goals

The following six strategic goals and their objectives are consistent with the ultimate mission, vision and values of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Strategic Goal I: Develop and maintain programs which promote a comprehensive culture of student-athlete success – academically, athletically and socially.

Strategic Goal II: Instill a “Compliance Conscience” throughout the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, and develop and maintain that Compliance Conscience throughout the NIU campus community and all constituents of Huskie Athletics.

Strategic Goal III: Develop and maintain outstanding sports programs which produce championship results.

Strategic Goal IV: Foster an environment where equity and respect for diversity in a broad sense are fundamental components of the day-to-day operations and the decision-making process (Diversity, in its broadest term, includes age, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, political affiliation, race, religious belief, and sexual orientation).

Strategic Goal V: Enhance all external resources necessary to provide our student-athletes with the ability to **EXPECT SUCCESS**, while continuing to expand external communication with all constituents.

Strategic Goal VI: Ensure fiscal responsibility through appropriate allocation of funds in accordance with the department’s strategic goals and plans.

The following objectives are based on a 2-3 year timeline. These will be reviewed on an annual basis and shared with everyone in Intercollegiate Athletics as well as other constituencies. The initiatives listed on the last page are developed and designed to be completed within one year.

Strategic Goal I

Develop and maintain programs which promote a comprehensive culture of student-athlete success – academically, athletically, and socially.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Objective #1 – Develop a national reputation for graduating student-athletes at a rate above the NCAA average

Objective #2 – Graduate “at risk” student-athletes at the highest national rate

Objective #3 – Elevate the Student-Athletic Academic Support Services (SAASS) program to consistently rank as the number one program in the Mid-American Conference (e.g., resources, graduation rate, APR)

Objective #4 – Develop and foster a culture of collaboration on campus for the academic success of student-athletes

Objective #5 – Recruit and retain quality staff

Objective #6 – Consistently provide opportunities for student-athletes to receive academic recognition.

LIFE SKILLS AND SERVICE

Objective #1 – Continue to enhance student-athlete citizenship and sportsmanship

- A. Identify specific targets for each team relative to community service and outreach
- B. Engage former student-athletes in life skills programming
- C. Strive to achieve Mid-American Conference and national recognition in all life skills opportunities (e.g., Sportsmanship Award, Program of Excellence)

Objective #2 – Develop and foster a campus culture of collaboration to enhance the CHAMPS/Life Skills program

- A. Provide opportunities for student-athletes to be involved in policy formation and executive decisions (i.e., SAAC, Student Association)
- B. Engage our student-athletes in campus events (i.e., SA organizational fair, meet and greet)
- C. Maintain SAAC’s status as a recognized campus student organization
- D. Work with athletic marketing and promotions to create programs involving campus students and student-athletes

Objective #3 – Create and foster a life skills philosophy of excellence among our student-athletes, coaches and staff

- A. Encourage staff and coaches to participate in community service initiatives
- B. Expect coaches to support their student-athletes' involvement in SAAC
- C. Enhance staff and coaches' professional development through Athletic Continuing Education (ACE) opportunities
- D. Provide support for staff and coaches who want to pursue educational and professional development opportunities

Objective #4 – Provide resources necessary to achieve excellence in our life skills programs

- A. Engage in relationships across campus to provide collaborative funding opportunities
- B. Apply for applicable grants (i.e., NCAA CHOICES, NCAA speakers)
- C. Utilize campus, MAC, and NCAA resources, when possible, to provide programs
- D. Utilize campus resources to assist in funding CHAMPS graduate assistant salaries (i.e., Rhoten Smith)

Objective #5 – Enhance our student-athlete well-being and Life Skills

- A. Maintain a website to afford student-athletes' and coaches' access to pertinent information
- B. Connect student-athletes with campus organizations
- C. Expand our Sports Medicine network to allow us to enhance our programs
- D. Utilize sports psychology to enhance retention, academic success and athletics success
- E. Provide the necessary resources for student-athlete success (e.g., handbook, website/blackboard, career exploration)

Strategic Goal II

Instill a “Compliance Conscience” throughout the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, and develop and maintain that Compliance Conscience throughout the NIU campus community and all constituents of Huskie Athletics.

Objective #1 – Enhance compliance rules education programming, both internal and external to the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, through consistent communication.

- A. Enhance compliance rules education of all Huskie coaches and athletic staff.
 - 1. Require attendance at all monthly rules education meetings
 - 2. Educate new coaching hires through orientation regarding the rules and regulations of Northern Illinois University, the MAC, and the NCAA.
 - 3. Effectively track NCAA recruiting exam scores
 - 4. During the academic year, maintain the compliance newsletter to market the teamwork approach required for rules compliance.
 - 5. Reinstigate and maintain once-per-semester rules education programs for athletics staff members
 - 6. Athletics compliance staff member will attend weekly external affairs meetings.
 - 7. Monitor pending NCAA legislation and seek feedback.

- B. Enhance the compliance rules education of current NIU student-athletes.
 - 1. Continue rules compliance communication with all student-athletes throughout the academic year; inclusive of, but not limited to, initial team rules education meetings, inclusion of NCAA regulations in the Student-Athlete Handbook, student host certification and exit interviews.
 - 2. Once per semester, address members of the SAAC committee at a monthly meeting to reinforce the importance of rules education throughout the entire NIU student-athlete population.
 - 3. Increase attendance of athletics compliance staff members at both practice sessions and competitions, both home and away, to enhance communication.

- C. Develop and maintain a rules education program for NIU faculty and staff.
 - 1. Bi-annually produce and distribute a *Guide to NCAA Regulations* pamphlet oriented to the faculty and staff at Northern Illinois University.
 - 2. Utilize the Northern Today, Student Affairs and Games Operation Staff to communicate the requirement for NCAA rules compliance for *all* NIU faculty and staff.
 - 3. Encourage NIU’s NCAA Faculty Representative to address the NIU Faculty Senate yearly to reinforce the need for NCAA rules compliance.
 - 4. Encourage Admissions, Records and Registration, and Student Financial Aid offices to attend the NCAA Regional Rules seminar on an annual basis.

- D. Enhance the compliance rules education of Huskie Athletics boosters.
 - 1. Bi-annually produce and distribute a Guide to NCAA Regulations pamphlet oriented to NIU’s athletic boosters.
 - 2. Continue scheduling athletics compliance staff members’ speaking engagements directed toward NIU’s athletic boosters.
 - 3. Continue to disseminate booster rules education information in *Huskie Tracks*, HASF’s official newsletter, radio interviews and game day video boards.

Objective #2 - Maintain and continually update the NIU Athletics Compliance web pages to reinforce the ‘Compliance Conscience’ to coaches, staff, current student-athletes, prospective student-athletes, the NIU campus community and boosters of Huskie Athletics.

- A. Utilize the NIU Intercollegiate Athletics Compliance Services Policies and Procedures as the basis for the content of the Compliance Website.
- B. Communicate that the Compliance Website is the primary location for many compliance materials, thereby providing an easily accessible form of communication relative to rules compliance for internal and external constituents.
- C. Add to website the opportunity for constituents to ask compliance questions.

Objective #3 - Research, with the intent to implement, the use of innovative technologies to both document and monitor the NCAA regulations as they relate to recruitment of prospective student-athletes.

- A. Utilize the internet and the NCAA listserv to identify innovative methods utilized by other Division I institutions for the monitoring of coaching activities as they relate to NCAA regulations regarding recruitment of student-athletes.
- B. Network with compliance colleagues within the Mid-American Conference and the Midwest region to identify innovative methods of monitoring coaching activities as they relate to NCAA regulations regarding recruiting.

Objective #4 - Research, with the intent to implement, the ‘best practices’ of rules compliance relative to NCAA, Mid-American Conference and university regulations.

- A. Utilize the internet and the NCAA listserv to research ‘best practices’ utilized by other Division I institutions relative to NCAA regulations.
- B. Network with compliance colleagues across the Mid-American Conference and within the Midwest region to identify their ‘best practices’ relative to NCAA and MAC regulations.

Objective #5 - Work with the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative to educate the institution as to the application and subsequent consequences of NCAA academic regulations on student-athlete recruitment, eligibility, and retention.

- A. Support the President’s Office proposal to have the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative permanently sit on the Faculty Senate as an ex-officio member.
- B. Ensure that the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative educates members of the Athletic Board as to any and all changes in NCAA regulation related to the academic requirements of student-athletes essential for athletic eligibility certification.
- C. Encourage the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative, as an ex-officio member, to attend as many Faculty Senate meetings as possible to both answer questions faculty might have and to share new and pertinent information related to Huskie Athletics and student-athletes.

Strategic Goal III

Develop and maintain outstanding sports programs which produce championship results.

Objective #1 – Recruit, retain and develop quality coaches and support staff.

- A. Identify outstanding coaches and staff with an equitable and thorough interview and selection process.
- B. Enhance employee compensation to rank minimally in the top half of the MAC.
- C. Foster communication through multiple mediums (i.e., Town Hall, Head Coaches' meetings, Huskie Updates, e-mail, intranet)
- D. Share coaching "best practices" in monthly Head Coaches' Meetings.
- E. Promote "buddy system" among coaches and staff.
- F. Continue to encourage professional development opportunities among coaches and staff.

Objective #2 - Attract and retain qualified student-athletes who have demonstrated success on and off the field of competition.

- A. Develop a philosophy and department-wide understanding of our institutional identity
- B. Develop sport-specific recruiting philosophies.
- C. Maintain recruiting relationships within the northern Illinois and Chicagoland region.
- D. Emphasize special programs that highlight our support for student-athletes – academically, athletically and socially.

Objective #3 - Provide quality facilities and sport program support that are comparable at the highest level within the Mid-American Conference.

- A. Evaluate, maximize and improve student-athlete well-being and other program support units relative to MAC competitors.
- B. Monitor and improve our sports program operating budgets relative to MAC competitors.
- C. Update and communicate our facility plan.
- E. Increase accessibility to facilities for student-athlete skill development and improvement.
- F. Assess/improve/maintain practice and competitive facilities, locker rooms, and team meeting space.

Objective #4 - Establish and maintain a game day environment conducive to winning.

Suggested edit (Ray Gooden): Create a structure that encompasses all phases of the competitive experience.

- A. Maintain quality games management.
- B. Work with campus constituents (e.g., housing and dining, campus police, Student Association, other pertinent student organizations) to support athletic events.
- C. Support quality spirit organizations.
- D. Solicit quality event entertainment.
- E. Implement sales ideas to increase attendance and not just add value for those already attending.
- F. Increase use of technology (television, radio, web site, etc.) to increase fan base and enhance connection with existing fans and supporters.
- G. Provide the highest level of customer service.

Objective #5 – Create scheduling opportunities that enhance competitiveness and the ability to win at the conference and national level (i.e., home events) for all sports.

- A. Sport administrators will work with coaches to develop a scheduling philosophy for each sport team.

- B. Encourage effort to maintain local and regional rivalries in all sports.
- C. Develop schedules that promote fan interest.
- D. Consider travel that enriches the educational benefits for student-athletes.
- E. Provide opportunities that enhance recruitment.
- F. Increase number of home competitions.

Strategic Goal IV

Foster an environment where equity and respect for diversity in a broad sense are fundamental components of the day-to-day operations and the decision-making process (Diversity, in its broadest term, includes age, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, political affiliation, race, religious belief, and sexual orientation).

Objective #1 – Include commitment to equity and diversity as an integral component of the athletics department.

- A. Ensure diverse representation in staff and student-athlete populations, publications and sport promotional opportunities.
- B. Direct marketing efforts toward spectators from diverse communities.
- C. Publicize and conduct camps/coaches' clinics in diverse communities and within diverse populations.
- D. Engage in community service events with and within diverse communities.
- E. Provide educational training/workshops for coaches, staff and student-athletes regarding diversity and equity.
- F. Support university initiatives relative to increased utilization of women and minority owned businesses.

Objective #2 - Achieve equity as defined by Title IX.

- A. Ensure that equity is a primary consideration when allocating resources (financial, personnel, facility and support) for student-athletes.
- B. Offer sports programs that serve the interests and abilities of our student population as identified by regularly monitored mechanisms.
- C. Implement roster management to move toward meeting the proportionality prong of Title IX.
- D. Provide necessary resources to initiate any actions indicated through analysis of the interest and ability survey conducted in FY09 and beyond.

Objective #3 - Attract, hire and retain quality staff from diverse populations.

- A. Ensure diverse representation on all search committees as required by university personnel policies.
- B. Demonstrate diligence in seeking an ethnically and gender diverse pool of candidates, including qualified finalists through networking and established organizations such as: Black Coaches Association (BCA), National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA), and Women in Higher Education for both searches and positions filled with search waivers.
- C. Provide equitable opportunities for professional development.
- D. Create awareness of opportunities and support staff participation on appropriate national boards and commissions that promote diversity awareness and equity.
- E. Support attendance at conferences/seminars such as: NACDA, NCAA Diversity Training, NCAA Leadership and Coaching Institutes, BCA, and NACWAA.

Objective #4 - Recruit and retain quality student-athletes from diverse populations.

- A. Continue to encourage recruiting student-athletes from diverse populations.
- B. Provide leadership opportunities for student-athletes from diverse populations.
- C. Maintain a welcoming environment in the athletic department, university and community for student-athletes from diverse populations.

Strategic Goal V

Enhance all external resources necessary to provide our student-athletes with the ability to expect success while continuing to expand external communication with all constituents.

Objective # 1 - Identify and secure sources of funding for current and future capital projects.

- A. Complete private funding of Yordon Academic and Athletic Performance Center through a combination of new major gift donors and appropriate leverage efforts with existing donors.
- B. Launch structured campaign for Indoor Practice Facility.
- C. Develop a capital project initiative list.

Objective # 2 - Broaden and increase annual giving campaign.

- A. Continue to implement athletic development structure that emphasizes an increase in Huskie Athletic Scholarship Fund giving.
- B. Increase new HASF donor base by 25% in 2009 and 30% in 2010 and 2011, while also increasing dollars raised by 10% annually.
- C. Make donor retention a primary focus of each annual fund drive, with donor retention goals of 80% annually - a minimum increase of nearly 13% based on historical data.
- D. Expand gift-in-kind donor relationships with an emphasis on car dealer, housing, and dining entities.
- E. Introduce culture of support to current student-athletes that emphasizes philanthropic contributions after graduation through an active Varsity Club.

Objective # 3 - Develop consistent brand messaging through all marketing mediums while securing additional revenue streams.

- A. Increase brand awareness in the marketplace for all sports programs
- B. Increase season and group ticket sales by 10% annually for all sports.
- C. Establish strong relationship with multimedia rights holder to continue to build upon corporate partnerships.
- D. Continue to find new revenue streams to secure additional resources.
- E. Develop interactive point of sale promotions with current and new retail partners to increase licensing revenue by 10% per year.
- F. Continue to enhance in-game experience.

Objective # 4 - Improve and broaden communication with all external constituents.

- A. Secure additional media outlets to air Huskie sports programming in conjunction with ISP, our multimedia rights partner.
- B. Continue to improve the department website to improve communication flow to fans, donors, alumni, ticket holders and media outlets.
- C. Participate in various community and campus events (examples: Huskie Bash, Corn Fest, Chamber and Rotary Events, 50 Men Who Cook, Pumpkin Fest, etc.)
- D. Further cultivate relationships with local, regional, and national media outlets.
- E. Continue to utilize athletic media relations to provide local, regional and national recognition of academic and athletic success.
- F. Use modern technology such as voicemail blasts and appropriate internet tools (Face Book, My Space, e-mail, etc.) to reach season ticket holders and students

Objective #5 - Engage student body to cultivate a mindset that Huskie Athletics is “their program.”

- A. Continue the development and improve coordination of a student led support group with increased participation and minimum of 1,000 active members.
- B. Continue to enhance campus wide marketing and promotional efforts and implement interactive opportunities to interface the general student population with current student-athletes on a consistent basis.
- C. Enhance our young alumni program designed to continue the overall excitement beyond their undergraduate experience with a three-year goal of 200 committed participants.
- D. Use appropriate spirit tools (the fight song, spirit days, reminders that the Huskie logo NEVER comes off, etc.) to engender pride and loyalty as an athletic department fan while an undergraduate and as an alum.

Strategic Goal VI

Ensure financial responsibility through appropriate allocation of funds in accordance with the department's strategic goals and plans.

Objective #1 - Communicate department-wide philosophy to all athletic staff members of being fiscally responsible and prudent in all budgetary decisions for the betterment of our sport programs and athletic department overall.

- A. Develop priorities for funding allocation with appropriate timelines. This does not exclude any sports, but would establish a point-of-emphasis that can ultimately benefit all 17 sport programs.

Objective #2 - Remain diligent in the use of resources, including University funds, annual and capital gifts, gifts-in-kind, and promotional/sponsorship dollars to ensure a disciplined approach to spending.

- A. Provide electronic access to reports for coaches and department heads.
- B. Develop and implement mechanism for staff to evaluate and prioritize expenses within each unit, in conjunction with supervisor.
- C. Develop three-year funding strategy for every sport team or unit, based on the priorities established for each, to include annual events.
- D. Establish quarterly meetings with head coach or department head, Sport AD, and appropriate Business Operations staff member.

Objective #3 - Fully maximize resources to ensure fiscal responsibility.

- A. Compare reports (i.e., EADA and Division IA Directors Salary Survey) to benchmark operating expenses and base salaries to see where NIU stands in comparison to the other MAC schools, keeping in mind the challenges in comparing different institutions.
- B. Allocate resources to items that are essential or add value.
- C. Review all audit reports, internal and external, for potential improvement.
- D. Formally compare best practices with our constituents (i.e., cell phones, courtesy cars, etc.).



ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES 2008-09

1. Camps – Dee Abrahamson
2. Coaches/Staff Orientation – Dee Abrahamson
3. Equipment/adidas – Glen Krupica
4. Multimedia Rights – Glen Krupica
5. Planning – Senior Staff
6. Facilities Master Plan – Executive Team
7. NCAA Certification – All Department
8. Exit Interviews – Faculty Athletics Representative
9. Basketball: Students/Game Day/Seating – Robert Collins, Tim McMurray
10. Ticket/Donors: One-Stop Shopping – Glen Krupica, Tim McMurray
11. Roster Management – Dee Abrahamson
12. Departmental Intranet – Dee Abrahamson
13. Student-Athlete Welfare Allocation – Robert Collins
14. Game/Event Management - Dee Abrahamson