

THE STATE OF OHIO UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS



The following is a review of the current state of Ohio University Athletics. Outlined is its value, successes, challenges and future. This is the most critical time in the department's history. Timely and strategic steps are needed to best ensure its ability to benefit the university and community for years to come.

VALUE OF ATHLETICS

- **To University:** Athletics is said to be a window through which the university is viewed. Athletic events annually generate millions of dollars in media exposure for the university, which in turn benefit student enrollment, financial stability, fundraising, institutional pride, and connection with alumni and campus life.
- **To Community:** Athletic events improve quality of life by offering year-round entertainment, producing wide-spread area economic impact, and statewide and regional pride.

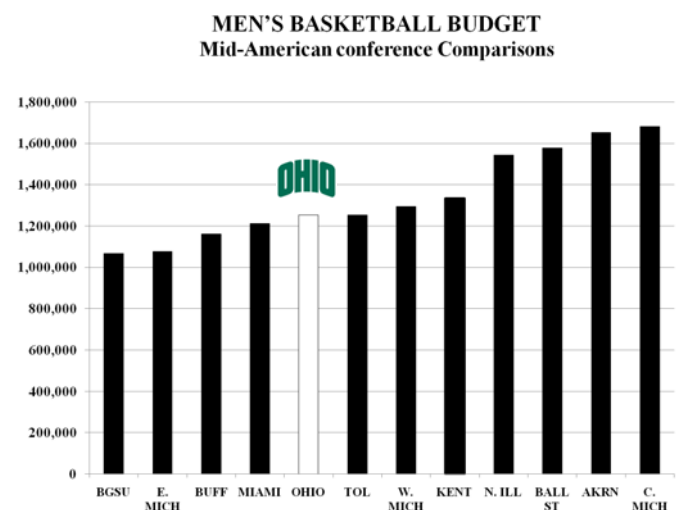
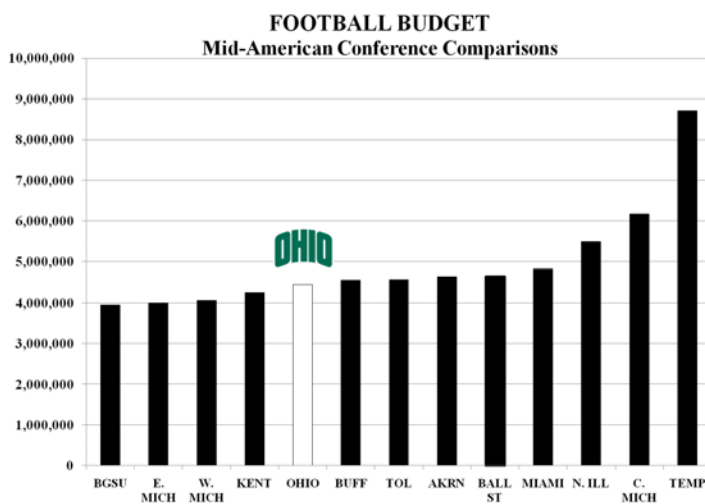
SUCSESSES

- **Sports Programs:** Bobcat athletic teams won four Mid-American Conference championships in 2007-08 (volleyball, women's cross country, field hockey and swimming). Bobcat women's athletics finished second in the all-sports trophy for 2007-08 after winning this honor the previous year. Last year, numerous men's and women's student-athletes earned national, regional and all-conference recognition.
- **Academics:** Ohio Athletics graduates 92 percent of student athletes who complete their eligibility—one of the top marks in the country. Graduation rates exceed the Division I national average as well as the general population of Ohio University students. Graduation rates for football and men's basketball are 22 and 10 percent above the national average, respectively. The NCAA graduation success rate is five points higher than the national average. The Ohio student-athlete grade point average is 3.1.
- **Community:** Bobcat student-athletes are active in the community supporting such organizations as: Big Brother Big Sisters, Good Works, Relay For Life, Red Cross blood drives, Athens Beautification Day, Athens County Food Pantry, Share Your Souls Shoe Drive, plus reading in area elementary schools and day care centers.
- **Diversity/Equity Commitment:** The athletic department is a major contributor to the ethnic diversity population experienced by the university. Additionally, athletics has been nationally recognized for its commitment to gender equity and Title IX.
- **NCAA Rules Compliance:** Ohio University Athletics is committed to integrity in all areas. Ohio Athletics has never committed a major NCAA rules violation in its history (276 different NCAA institutions have committed at least one major violation).



FINANCES

- Annual Budget:** One of the key areas which affect future program growth is the current annual operating budget. The athletic department is currently projecting an operating deficit for the 2008-09 budget year of \$1.8 million. This obviously presents a formidable challenge. Athletics has been efficient in its operations, but must develop a plan to ensure long-term financial stability.
- Perspective:** Ohio Athletics is not alone in its funding challenges. According to a May 23, 2008 report in the Chronicle for Higher Education, approximately 95 percent of Division I athletic programs are not self-supporting. As a comparison, most campus academic and administrative units nationwide are not financially self supporting and must receive institutional assistance in order to operate.
- Investment = Return:** In all organizations, the amount of resources invested is a key factor in what one can expect in return. The Ohio University athletic department currently has the challenge of being funded at a lower level than most of its Mid-American Conference (MAC) counterparts. For example, programs like football (9th of 13), men's basketball (8th of 12) and women's basketball (10th of 12), which will assist with financial issues when successful, are funded in the lower third of the conference.

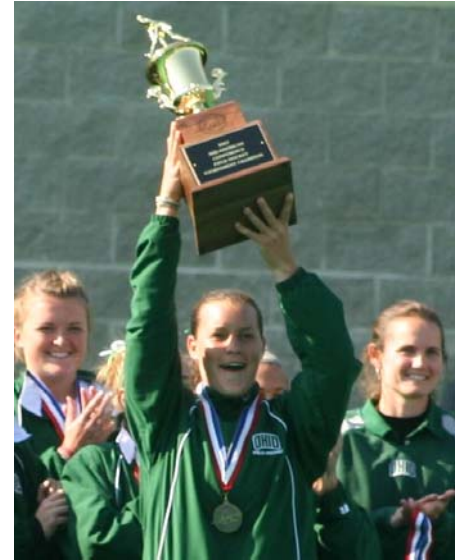


- Revenues:** Ohio Athletics generates more revenue than the average conference athletic program, despite being in the one of the smallest markets. Overall, revenues have increased over 70% in the past two years. The Ohio Bobcat Club, the department's fundraising arm, has increased support by nearly 120% in the past two years.



THE FUTURE

- **Vision:** The future vision of Ohio University Athletics is to be more nationally known and the premier program in the Mid-American Conference with all teams annually competing for championships, being recognized nationally for the academic achievements and to represent the university with integrity in all areas.
- **Planning:** In June 2008, the athletic department announced its Bobcat Renaissance program, which outlines a variety of key strategies for future success. A vital element in this plan is to finalize a five-year strategic plan for athletics by the first part of 2009. This plan will incorporate input from students, faculty, staff and fans. The document will also address primary objectives for athletics in the university's Vision Ohio plan.
- **Cost Reductions:** Addressing the financial concerns began in January 2007 with the cutting of four sports for financial and gender equity reasons. The athletic department is currently reducing expenses wherever possible. It is also in the process of reconstructing all operational budgets in order to finalize a significant budget reduction for 2009-10.
- **Future Changes:** The department is in the process of considering adjustments to a variety of areas which include creating new seating sections, licensing royalties, fundraising for a variety of facility enhancements, modifying ticket pricing, and Ohio Bobcat Club related benefits (parking, hospitality, and seat donation requirements) in order to best position Bobcat Athletics for a successful future.
- **Growth:** New initiatives, like the Bobcat Representative Program, have been introduced to build better relationships with athletic and university constituents and increase revenues. Nearly 100 volunteers will assist the department with these efforts statewide.



CONCLUSION

- **Striving For Excellence:** Ohio Athletics provides many benefits for the university and community, the value of which is not fully recognized. The program is experiencing unprecedented success in a variety of areas. There are always challenges. The current financial status of the program and lack of funding support poses a difficult hurdle. However, if everyone works together, anything can be accomplished! A successful athletic department makes a difference. Bobcat athletics is committed to strive for excellence so it can contribute the very best for Ohio University and the community.

October, 2008

