

Onondaga Community College Athletics Program Assessment June 2010

Introduction

As the second-largest undergraduate college in Central New York and one of the fastest growing community colleges in the country (*Community College Week*), Onondaga Community College has experienced unprecedented enrollment growth, achieving record enrollments in recent years. The College's intercollegiate athletic program has also grown and experienced significant success in recent years. Onondaga is the home of the 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010 National Junior College Athletics Association National Championship men's lacrosse team; the 2008 National Championship men's tennis team and the 2009 National Championship women's lacrosse team. In April 2009 the first synthetic turf home field in the history of the institution was completed and dedicated. Construction of a \$24 million sports complex adjacent to the field is also planned, with an anticipated completion date of fall 2011.

The role of the athletics program has been part of college discussions and planning relative to several key initiatives in recent years:

- Athletic Facilities Master Plan developed in 2005
- Strategic Enrollment Management initiated in 2005
- Establishment of the OCC Association, Inc. in 2005
- Residence halls feasibility study in 2006
- Athletic Programs Master Plan in 2008

In September 2009 the College was notified that, due to failure to submit fall eligibility forms on time, and failure to ensure that all student-athletes were enrolled full-time at the start of the semester, Onondaga was in violation of National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) regulations. An appeal was filed regarding the late-submission finding, and that appeal was denied by NJCAA. The penalty imposed by NJCAA was a forfeiture of all games played in advance of the established deadline for eligibility submissions, and forfeiture of all games in which ineligible athletes participated. Men's soccer, women's soccer, women's volleyball, and women's tennis were all impacted by the NJCAA rulings.

As the College strives to achieve its mission and strategic priorities, it is appropriate that a comprehensive review of all aspects of its athletics program be conducted to ensure that it is consistent with the institutional mission and goals and to better understand the role of athletics in attracting and retaining students as part of strategic enrollment management.

Goals

The goals of this evaluation are as follows:

- Review existing Athletics Master Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the College mission and strategic priorities, that it defines guiding values and principles for the athletics program, and that it addresses integration of the athletics program with the academic and student development goals of the College.

- Ensure that Onondaga Community College is in compliance with all external requirements pertaining to its athletics program; identify any areas of non-compliance and recommend corrective action.
- Ensure development and documentation of appropriate policies and procedures that provide for sound management of the athletics program. In addition to having documented procedures in place to ensure compliance with external requirements, sound management includes appropriate fiscal practices for budgeting and financial management, leadership and management of human resources, i.e. hiring and evaluation of employees, conflict resolution, change management, etc., program assessment and evaluation with a focus on strategic planning, decision-making and accountability, and awareness of legal issues including applicable higher education law.
- Identify and implement best practices for administration and operation of all aspects of an athletics program at the community college level. In addition to planning to ensure consistency with the College's mission and strategic priorities, administration of all aspects of an athletics program includes coordination with the academic program (recruitment, admission, advisement, certification), coordination of units within the athletics department (intramural, intercollegiate, fitness center) and integration of the department with the broader institution/organizations (e.g. OCCA). This also pertains to the role of athletics in contributing to an enhanced student life experience for student-athletes as well as for the general student population, leading to development of campus pride and increased student goal attainment.
- Determine appropriate staffing, reporting lines, position descriptions, facilities and funding levels to effectively support the athletics program

Methodology

The review will encompass all aspects of the athletics program, including intramurals, fitness/recreational/wellness and intercollegiate athletics. The review will include an audit of compliance with NJCAA requirements, an analysis of relevant institutional data, comparison with best practices at peer institutions, identification of areas in need of improvement and recommended actions for the future.

Context for Review

The College mission and strategic priorities, guidelines and standards of the National College Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the State University of New York (SUNY) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) will serve as the context for the review.

Compliance Audit

An audit of compliance with NJCAA requirements will be conducted by the Assistant to the President/General Counsel. Any areas of non-compliance will be identified and corrective action recommended.

Data Collection/Review

Data from the year 2000 (where possible) to the present will be collected for the following:

- Number of athletics program offerings and a description of each

- Number of student-athlete participants by program
- Number of spectators by program
- Description of facilities by program
- Coaches (full and part time)
- Other employees (full and part time)
- Annual operating budget from the College in support of athletics, to include actual year-end revenues and expenses
- Annual operating budget from OCCA in support of athletics, to include actual year-end revenues and expenses
- Annual fund raising in support of athletics, to include actual year-end revenues and expenses

A chart documenting the current organizational structure for athletics and appropriate sections of the Athletics Master Plan and the Athletics/Sports Facilities Master Plan will also be provided.

Documentation of Processes

College staff will complete the Athletics Program Assessment Form and will provide written documentation for all current athletics policies and procedures. This component will be coordinated by the Assistant to the President.

Identification of Best Practices

Institutional peers with exemplary programs will be identified and the Education Advisory Board (EAB) will be used to obtain comparative information regarding the above referenced data, policies and procedures. This effort will be coordinated by the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research (IPAR).

Task Force

A task force will be convened, chaired by Board Chair David W. Murphy. The task force will review data and information documenting all current aspects of the athletics program, including facilities, program goals, operations, policies and procedures. Information to be reviewed will include data regarding athletics offerings, student participation, staffing and organizational structure, facilities, funding, fiscal practices and compliance systems. The goals of the task force are to:

- Review data provided by College staff regarding athletics at Onondaga Community College as compared with peer institutions
- Discuss existing models and best practices regarding athletics program administration
- Provide insight to guide the vision for the future of athletics at Onondaga Community College

Report and Recommendations

College staff will summarize all relevant information into a final report for review by the President and the Board Chair. After taking all relevant information into consideration the President and the Board Chair will develop final recommendations and determine next steps. This process will be completed by the end of the 2009-2010 academic year.

Preliminary Findings

As the College strives to achieve optimal enrollment and respond to the needs and expectations of a changing student demographic, the following key accomplishments directly relate to the athletics program:

- Established the Onondaga Community College Association, Inc. (2005) to oversee use of student activity fees and auxiliary services revenues to achieve its mission to “support the mission/vision of the College and promote student, employee, and community development by providing high-quality, relevant, accessible, equitable, and diverse programs and activities designed to stimulate exploration, discovery, and transformation.”
- Opened the first on-campus residence halls (2006). Residence halls have transformed the campus, and the need for planned recreational and wellness activities and services has increased as a result.
- Created the College’s Enrollment Council (2007), which submitted the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Master Plan in fall 2008. Building and supporting quality sports programs is a key strategy in support of achieving optimal enrollment.
- Developed a Facilities Master Plan and an Athletic Facilities Master Plan, which recognize that athletic facility design guidelines need to meet the College’s strategic plan for campus development and consider future impacts on other campus programs.
- Completed the first multi-sport home turf field in the history of the institution with capacity for 2500 spectators. Construction of a \$24.3 million sports arena is also planned, with an anticipated completion date of fall 2011. The SRC Arena will be located adjacent to the existing Health and Physical Education (HPE) building, allowing the arena, Murphy Field and the HPE building to be connected in a single footprint as a sports complex.

Relationship to Onondaga Community College Association, Inc. (OCCA)

The athletics program is funded primarily through student activity fee dollars, which are administered by a non-profit corporation, the Onondaga Community College Association, Inc., whose mission, goals and strategies include specific items related to athletics, including:

- Increase the number of intercollegiate athletic programs
- Provide intramural and recreational programs for all students
- Increase representation of diverse groups on all athletic and recreational teams
- Increase intercollegiate and intramural opportunities with focus on lifetime sports and activities
- All intercollegiate athletic programs will uphold high academic and athletic standards
- Student athletes will demonstrate the ability to work within diverse groups to accomplish individual and team goals
- Student athletes will demonstrate effective leadership skills

Compliance Audit

A thorough audit of compliance with NJCAA requirements was conducted by Amy Renna, Assistant to the President/General Counsel. Reporting and documentation were found to be in

compliance with NJCAA requirements. One procedure was identified that had the potential to result in non-compliance with regard to certification of enrollment. Appropriate modification has been made to this procedure to eliminate the potential for error.

Data Collection

Extensive data was provided by Stephanie Reynolds, Associate Vice President for Student Services, and Dave Pasiak, Interim Athletic Director. Interviews were conducted with each of the coaches and the athletic trainer. Data was also provided by the human resources department, campus facilities, and the Comptroller of Affiliated Organizations.

Athletic Program Offerings

Onondaga currently fields a total of eleven (11) intercollegiate teams, with participation as follows:

Men's Teams	2009 – 2010 Participants	Women's Teams	2009 – 2010 Participants
Baseball	24	Basketball	15
Basketball	15	Lacrosse (new 2008-09)	23
Lacrosse	48	Soccer (new 2009-10)	22
Soccer (new 2009-10)	29	Softball	10
Tennis	14	Tennis	6
		Volleyball	12

The College's intercollegiate athletics program has experienced significant success in recent years. Onondaga is home of the 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010 National Junior College Athletics Association (NJCAA) National Champions men's lacrosse team and the 2008 NJCAA National Champions men's tennis team. In addition, the women's lacrosse team won the NJCAA National Championship in 2009, their inaugural year.

The chart on the following page provides additional information regarding the intercollegiate teams and athletes.

Onondaga Community Athletic Statistical Totals

Year	W/L %	% of Teams in Conference Playoffs	% of Teams in Regional Playoffs	% of Teams in National Tournament	% of Local Players	% Out of Area Players	Athletes to Transfer*	% of Total Transfers Playing	% of Transfers to Scholarship	% of # of Try- Outs	Total # of Athletes	Total # of Athletes in Res Halls	Overall % of Athletes in Res Halls**
2002-03	53%	75%	88%	0%	89%	11%	100%	61%	11%	171	117		
2003-04	63%	75%	100%	14%	92%	8%	81%	71%	31%	161	97		
2004-05	49%	80%	75%	25%	88%	13%	57%	71%	59%	194	120		
2005-06	62%	75%	75%	25%	85%	15%	79%	71%	50%	206	121		
2006-07	63%	100%	63%	25%	82%	16%	64%	78%	29%	248	136	64	47%
2007-08	54%	80%	75%	25%	64%	37%	73%	84%	35%	269	155	63	41%
2008FA					52%	48%					60	28	47%
Average	57%	81%	79%	19%	79%	21%	76%	73%	36%	208	124 avg	64 avg	44%

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* This number represents the % of students eligible to and then accomplishing the transfer. For example in 2002-03, 32 students were eligible for transfer and 32 students transferred.

The College also offers approximately 16 intramural programs, all of which are open to men and women. The following chart provides data regarding the intramurals program:

Onondaga Community College Intramurals Program					
Fall 2007			Fall 2008		
Activity	Number of teams	Number of players	Activity	Number of teams	Number of players
Flag Football	6	70	Flag Football	12	100
Dodge ball	8	55	Dodge ball	4	30
Volleyball	5	35	Volleyball	6	45
Texas Hold-em	3	15	Texas Hold-em	3	15
Fantasy Football		12	Fantasy Football		12
Tennis		10	Tennis		12
Spring 2008					
Activity	Number of teams	Number of players			
Basketball	21	200			
Ping Pong		10			
Indoor Soccer	6	50			
Texas Hold-em	3	15			
3-on-3 Basketball	12	45			

Organizational Structure and Staffing

The Athletic Director reports to the Associate Vice President for Student Services (see attached organizational chart, Appendix D) and the athletics program is currently supported as follows:

- Full time Athletic Director
- Full time Intramural Coordinator
- Full time Evening Coordinator
- 40% clerical support
- Contract Athletic Trainer
- 11 Part time head coaches
- Varying number of assistant coaches, interns and work-study students

Three (3) head coaches have full time positions on campus, independent of their coaching responsibilities. These include Interim Athletic Director, Admissions Counselor and Enrollment Associate.

Funding for Athletics

The athletics program is funded through a combination of college operating dollars and student activity fees, administered by the OCCA. In addition, student athletes engage in various fund raising activities to supplement these funds. The following table provides a 5-year summary of the athletic budgets:

**Onondaga Community College
Summary of Athletic Budgets**

	2005 – 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010
College Operating					
Athletic Director	\$167,298	\$173,489	\$218,842	\$247,477	\$283,813
Aquatics	\$50,956	\$63,978	\$67,446	\$72,104	\$82,865
Fitness Center	\$10,915	\$13,128	\$13,905	\$9,690	\$9,049
Total	\$229,169	\$250,595	\$300,193	\$329,271	\$375,727
OCCA Intramurals					
Administration	\$0	\$3,615	\$20,247	\$45,541	\$48,980
Basketball	\$0	\$0	\$1,795	\$0	\$0
Open Recreation	\$0	\$517	\$840	\$0	\$9,398
Total	\$0	\$4,132	\$22,882	\$45,541	\$58,378
OCCA Intercollegiate					
Administration	\$112,974	\$158,391	\$155,206	\$208,097	\$169,653
Men's Baseball	\$12,684	\$14,785	\$11,075	\$11,146	\$20,745
Men's Basketball	\$14,333	\$22,611	\$18,634	\$18,869	\$20,491
Men's Lacrosse	\$19,459	\$25,296	\$36,416	\$28,298	\$34,008
Men's Soccer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$595	\$19,670
Men's Tennis	\$7,100	\$6,267	\$17,133	\$9,887	\$11,627
Women's Basketball	\$10,776	\$15,034	\$13,389	\$23,106	\$19,083
Women's Lacrosse	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,223	\$20,450
Women's Soccer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$440	\$19,670
Women's Softball	\$6,738	\$7,400	\$12,212	\$12,680	\$16,819
Women's Tennis	\$3,812	\$3,453	\$4,125	\$5,727	\$8,461
Women's Volleyball	\$11,022	\$9,762	\$11,206	\$9,020	\$15,335
Total	\$198,898	\$262,999	\$279,396	\$343,088	\$376,012
Grand Total	\$428,067	\$517,726	\$602,471	\$717,900	\$810,117

Note: 2005 - 2006 through 2008 - 2009 reflect actual expenditures; 2009 - 2010 represents the approved budget amount.

Documentation of Processes

Routine procedures appear to be understood and consistently followed by College staff and the Interim Athletic Director. There was consistent verbal description of processes. However, policies and procedures are not documented in writing. In addition, there is no formal training for coaches with regard to administrative tasks and expectations, no orientation for athletes, no handbook for athletes or coaches, and no academic advisement specific to athletes.

Identification of Best Practices

The Education Advisory Board (EAB) contacted the NJCAA to request identification of institutional peers with exemplary athletics programs. Seven institutions located in the Northeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and South with student enrollments of between 6,900 and 19,000 students and between 5 and 18 intercollegiate athletic teams were contacted and interviewed. However, the EAB report includes the following:

Note on NJCAA Compliance Policies:

Across the course of research, several contacts – including representatives from the NJCAA – expressed hesitation in designating individual athletic departments or policies as “best practice.” According to contacts, this reluctance was for two primary reasons:

- Unlike the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which employs attorneys to write and enforce regulation, the NJCAA’s rules are largely written by college athletic directors. As a result, NJCAA regulations are often loosely defined and more difficult to interpret than NCAA rules.*
- Contacts suggested that the NJCAA largely relies on self-policing to maintain compliance. For example, athletic departments are required to self-report rule violations; however, at most contact athletic departments, administrators have not established processes to investigate rules violations, and often depend on coaches, staff, and student athletes to report non-compliant behavior.*

Task Force

A task force, chaired by Board Chair David W. Murphy, has been convened. In addition to Chairman Murphy, members of the task force include:

Dr. Sean Fanelli, Past-president (retired), Nassau Community College

Ms. Jeanne Murphy, Associate Director for Student-Athlete Success/Senior Women’s Administrator, LeMoyne College

Dr. Ron Williams, Past-president (retired), Herkimer County Community College.

Meetings of the task force were held on Friday, March 12, 2010 and Friday, April 30, 2010.

Members of the task force stressed the importance of a student-athlete orientation to convey expectations to student-athletes and secure their commitment with regard to appropriate behavior and principles. Task force members also noted that the traditional structure of athletic programs reporting to a chief student affairs officer may not provide the priority needed to achieve program growth in support of institutional goals. It was noted that LeMoyne College recently moved its athletics program to report to the CFO.

Other topics discussed by the task force include appropriate funding for athletics, staffing, and handling of sports camps.

Recommendations

As noted above, the College has experienced significant growth in enrollment and in its athletics program, and has been transformed with the introduction of residence halls, the opening of Murphy Field, and the success of its intercollegiate athletic teams. In accordance with the College's strategic plan, new initiatives continue to be implemented within and across departments to improve student outcomes and success. The opening of the planned SRC Arena will further contribute to this growth and transformation.

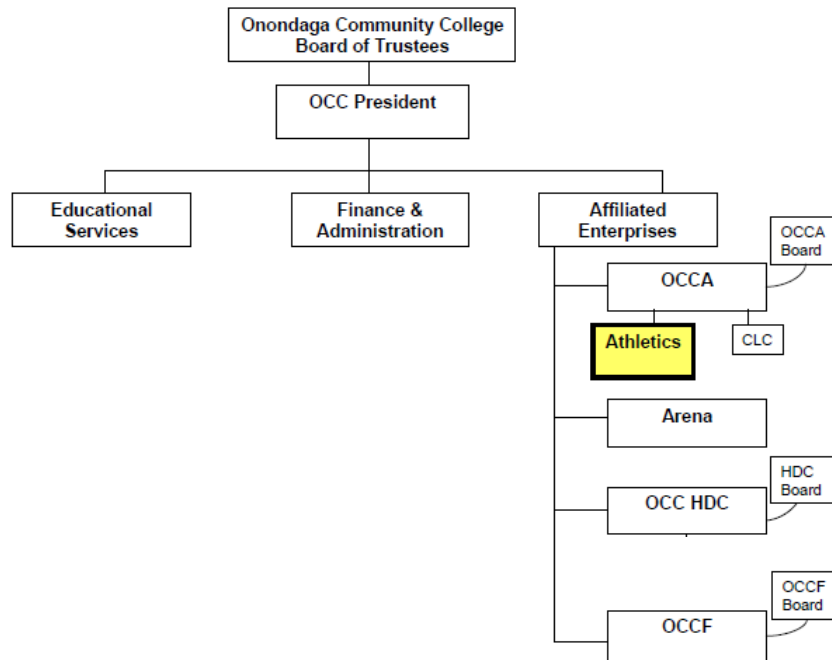
The new arena and sports complex will enable the College to remedy the inadequate state of its existing athletic and performing arts and events facilities, while significantly increasing its capacity to support its athletic and intramurals sports programs, host a wide range of performing arts and other events on campus to improve student learning and student engagement, better support academic programs, and enhance the quality of life for residents of Central New York. As the College continues to focus attention and resources on athletics – adding new sports programs, expanding intramurals, and building new facilities – it is imperative that the management structure provide for appropriate leadership, supervision and strategic vision. The opening of the SRC Arena in 2011 will present unprecedented opportunities for growth, as well as create new staffing and administrative demands. Management must be aggressive, with a specific intent of operating with a varied event schedule while at the same time functioning as an “enterprise” operation capable of generating operating revenues and managing operating expenses.

In addition to growth in enrollment and in the athletics program, the College's affiliate organizations – the OCC Association, Inc. (OCCA), and the OCC Housing Development Corporation (HDC) – have also experienced growth. Since inception, the OCCA and HDC have added staff to implement programs and provide services, but they have not to date hired a senior-level employee charged with leadership and oversight of all affiliated entities with a singular vision and strategic plan in support of the College. These affiliate entities have received significant staff support from College departments and the executive leadership team to date has enabled these entities to establish their operations and build assets during their most formative years. As these entities continue to grow, the existing organizational structure will be insufficient to provide the level of administrative oversight necessary to ensure that each remains a well-managed corporation, as well as the level of visionary and day-to-day leadership necessary to sustain their continued growth.

In consideration of all these factors, the following recommendations are offered:

- **Organizational Structure**
 - The College should consider establishing a new senior title to provide leadership, supervision and strategic vision for the SRC arena, the OCCA, the HDC and the OCC Foundation. This position would be a peer to the Provost and the CFO and would actively work to ensure cross-divisional collaboration and cooperation, support continued growth of each affiliate entity and ensure that the progress of each entity collectively advances the overall mission and goals of the College in a coordinated, effective, and efficient manner.
 - The College should consider shifting responsibility for oversight of the athletics program from Student Services to this new senior title, which would ensure that athletics is appropriately integrated with the SRC Arena and the Foundation.

Potential Alternative Organizational Structure



- **Staffing**
 - The College should consider hiring a senior vice president to provide leadership and oversight for the SRC Arena and all affiliate enterprises, as well as for the athletics program.
 - The College should consider adding a full-time assistant athletic director whose responsibilities would include compliance and academic advisement for student athletes.
 - The College should consider hiring a full-time, certified athletic trainer. Supplemental, certified training staff can be secured as needed on a contract basis. An internship program with SUNY Cortland should be investigated as a way of meeting this need
 - Staff support for the athletic department currently consists of a part-time (40%) CSEA employee. A full-time support person should be allocated to the athletic department.
 - The College should consider the addition of an equipment manager to manage, monitor and maintain all equipment and uniforms.
 - Salaries of the athletic director and coaches should be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate to be competitive and equitable among sports.
 - The College should review on an annual basis the designation of the team physician(s).
 - The College should continue to explore appropriate options/opportunities for coaches to be full-time College employees.
- **Program Administration**
 - Policies and procedures should be documented in writing and provided to all who have responsibilities related to athletic program administration (certification, reporting, fiscal, etc.)

- A student athlete handbook should be developed to provide information and expectations with regard to conduct, compliance, financial aid, academic support, academic requirements, etc.
- A student athlete orientation should be established to clearly convey expectations to student-athletes and secure their commitment with regard to appropriate behavior and principles.
- A coach's handbook should be developed that provides clear expectations with regard to the role of coaches. Annual rules testing should be required of all coaches; coaches' contracts should contain a non-compliance release clause.
- Consider creating a Student Athlete Advisory Committee to facilitate and encourage communication between student athletes and the athletic department. This would also encourage student leadership and service.
- Sports Camps
 - The College should review current policies and practices of the various sports camps and how revenue is distributed among the coaches, staff and the College. The feasibility of overnight options should be explored.
- Marketing
 - The College should develop a plan to address how to improve the sports information/marketing; the possibility of increased staffing should be explored.

Conclusion

A successful athletics program facilitates student engagement and contributes to an atmosphere of campus pride, leading to increased retention and student success. In addition, the success of the intercollegiate teams has contributed to national recognition for the College and enhanced the image of the College in the local community. The vision for the future of OCC's athletics programs must continue to be aligned with the mission and goals of the College and its affiliate corporations (OCC Association, OCC Housing Development Corporation and OCC Foundation), and support Strategic Enrollment Management goals to achieve optimal enrollment and student success.