



Governors State  
UNIVERSITY



G O V E R N O R S S T A T E

# JAGUARS™

## ATHLETICS MASTER PLAN

ONE PROGRAM ONE PURPOSE





## MISSION

To be the University that elite student-athletes in the Chicago area and beyond attend to further themselves both academically and athletically. We look to develop champions both on the field and off the field.

## VISION

The Governors State University Department of Athletics operates as an integral part of the University's primary educational structure by being the model of comprehensive excellence.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Athletic Master Plan for 2021-2026 is a framework for continued growth of athletics for the next five years. The plan builds on the first athletic master plan with the addition of sports and revisits facilities needs of the programs.

The following areas assisted with development of the plan, Budget and Financial Planning, Institutional Research, Facilities Development and Athletics. The plan outlines revenue generated from student athletes, cost of waivers and athletic operations. Athletic operations includes existing costs of the program plus the addition of new sports and the infrastructure needed for approximately 300 athletes. This includes the hiring of additional coaches, trainers and full time administrative positions. The plan uses NAIA's

Return on Athletics model to measure success. The ROA model allows institutions to measure enrollment, discount rates, student success and financial return compared to peer institutions.

The plan intentionally staggered the rollout of new sport programs for recruitment, support and budgetary purposes. The implementation will also allow GSU's Facilities Department the ability to study, plan and incorporate athletic field considerations into the University's Facilities Master Plan.

The addition of new teams begins in year one of the master plan with four Varsity Reserve (i.e. junior varsity -JV) teams. These new teams will be based on the existing sports programs that have shown demand through existing recruitment efforts: Men's Basketball, Women's Volleyball, Men's Soccer and Women's Soccer. Varsity Reserve (VR) is an efficient use of existing resources with low overhead that supports the University's return on investment. The remaining sports will be introduced in years three through five. Those sports will include Women's Basketball VR, Women's Bowling, Men's and Women's Track, Men's Baseball, Women's Softball and Co-Ed Esports.

By 2026, Governors State University will be positioned to grow its athletics enrollment by nearly 250% and establish a core of students whose GPA averages close to 3.0 and is more likely to graduate than a non-athlete student.

ONE PROGRAM

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## HISTORY

Governors State University's first athletic master plan was implemented in 2014. Under this master plan, the University became a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) in the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference and by 2019 had grown to nine sports teams. This plan outlined the construction of soccer, softball, and base-

ball fields. Due to several complications, the fields have not come to fruition. This initial athletic master plan was built to produce more than just wins and losses. The plan's foundation was built on athletic competitiveness, academic success, life education and achievement, and Jaguar values – concepts we carry over into this five-year plan.

## BENEFITS OF ATHLETICS

Intercollegiate athletic programs at Governors State University produce hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit in the form of tuition and fees, housing, meal plans as well as books and supplies bought on campus. However, the benefit of intercollegiate athletics is more than dollars and cents. A successful athletic department at GSU benefits students, faculty, alumni, and the greater community of University Park in far-reaching ways. School pride, national recognition, improved academics, increased enrollment and deepened connections to the community will all be enhanced through the implementation of this five-year plan.

### 1. DIRECT PROFIT

Return on Athletics (ROA) is NAIA's process improvement model that allows institutions to advance enrollment, student success and financial outlook. ROA identifies institutional opportunities to increase the value of athletics with data analytics including measures for overall net return and net return per student-athlete. These numbers can be compared against other public institutions with similar enrollment, sport offerings and cost of attendance to show that GSU is doing exceedingly well returning net profits to the University. (Data available upon request)

### 2. DRIVE ENROLLMENT

While it is intuitive that student-athletes choose GSU for its athletic program, the reputation GSU earns from athletics can also attract non-athletes. According to a recent American Freshman National Norms survey, 40% of students chose a college partly due to its social life. Athletic contests offer a part of the social college experience students want in a college. A benefit that will grow as additional facilities allow hosting of more athletic events on campus.

### 3. STUDENT RETENTION

Students who are actively involved in extracurricular activities or the student community tend to experience better retention rates. Governors State Athletics have a retention rate of 61%. The average retention rate of comparable NAIA athletic programs is 51%. The number one reason for lack of student-athlete matriculation at GSU is poor academic performance followed by lack of facilities on campus. The five-year plan calls for a full time Assistant Director of Student Success whose job will be to focus on supporting student-athletes holistically to better retention numbers. As part of the University Master Plan, GSU Facilities will study how best to add needed facilities and strengthen existing facilities.

### 4. INCREASED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

On average, student-athletes at Governors State University perform better academically than the student body at large. At the end of the spring 2020 semester, our student-athletes achieved a department-wide GPA of 2.96 on a 4.0 scale. Seven of nine athletic teams earned a 3.0 or higher GPA. The current goal is to increase the overall athletic department GPA to 3.0 or higher. During the last academic year, GSU produced 17 NAIA Scholar-Athlete Award recipients and seven CCAC All-Academic Team selections.

### 5. HEIGHTEN GSU'S PROFILE

Team spirit brought about by successful and entertaining collegiate

sports can capture the enthusiasm of not only a campus but also a community. A focus on family friendly environments and tie-ins to local schools and club sports teams will result in deeper brand saturation within the surrounding community. While it is unrealistic to expect the millions larger university garner, opportunities exist for revenue from ads and sponsorships in existing and future facilities as well as throughout live-streamed home games. Donations from alumni and fans are positively correlated with team success. The addition of outdoor sports facilities would draw thousands of additional community members to campus in the form of camps, field rentals and high-profile showcase events. Furthermore, tens of thousands of dollars in annual revenue in the form of passive rentals, camps, clinics and showcase events would also ensue. Hosting post-season high school championships would bring visitors from across the state. Utilizing on-campus streaming capabilities would beam Governors State onto the devices thousands of Illinois residents with high school-aged children.

### 6. GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Athletics provides a platform for student-athletes to become involved in the community. Each student-athlete take part in a minimum of two service projects per year with many completing 5 or more projects annually. Individual teams have participated in clean-up of vacant lots in Monee, prepared meals for Feed our Starving Children in Schaumburg, assisted with mobile food banks in Crete, and raised donations for families affected by an apartment building fire in Chicago Heights. The highlight is the annual department-wide service day each November. The most recent service day saw student-athletes and coaches dispersing food baskets and winter clothing to needy families in the area. As part of their volunteer activities, GSU athletic teams promote the NAIA's Five Core Values of integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership through the NAIA Champions of Character program.

### 7. LONG-TERM CONNECTIONS

Participation in intercollegiate athletics develops life-long habits of healthy lifestyle, resiliency, drive and discipline. The ability to work within a team, take constructive criticism, set goals and persevere through setbacks will follow them into their future jobs and relationships as they become successful employees and fulfilled, well rounded adults. The friendships formed last long after the lights fade and the trophies are set upon the mantel. The students, faculty and staff cheering from the sidelines will develop a kinship of shared experience as lifelong ties bind them to their alma mater. The fond memories created will no doubt result in legacy students and alumni donations. Over time, a school culture beaming with pride and steeped in tradition will shape what it means to be a Jaguar and set GSU as a city on hill for others to emulate.

## EXISTING SPORTS

Currently Governors State Athletics consists of nine intercollegiate sports with 109 athletes who compete in the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference (CCAC).



Out of the nine sports, three teams host games on campus: Men's and Women's Basketball and Women's Volleyball.

## **EXPANSION SPORTS**

The Athletic Master Plan Committee researched sports with: (1) the capacity to grow in the Chicago-land market and (2) having available competition for scheduling games within the NAIA. The five-year plan seeks controlled expansion into sports that will provide sustainable growth.

### **2021: Varsity Reserve Men's Basketball, Men's Soccer, Women's Soccer**

Year one's goal of adding Varsity Reserve squads (better known as Junior Varsity or JV) for Men's Basketball, Women's Volleyball, and Men's Soccer are based on Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 player demand. The VR programs will have the benefit of preexisting varsity sports to build on and provide support. While VR recruitment poses unique challenges, it does open GSU athletics up to a larger pool of student-athletes. VR will result in more community tie-in as it is expected that VR programs will draw heavily from our local communities. VR will see an increase in Prairie Place enrollment. The current goal is approximately 27 players per team for soccer and 15 per team for basketball and volleyball. VR sports will also assist with Title IX deficiencies. The introduction of VR represents the largest growth of student athletes in the five-year plan with the lowest per student cost.

### **2022: Varsity Reserve Women's Basketball**

Year two will see the further expansion of VR teams by adding Women's Basketball. While year two provides the smallest increase of student-athletes (15) this is intentional. Year two will be used to prepare the department for three brand new teams to be added in year three. This will also provide GSU's Facilities department the ability to study, plan and incorporate athletic fields into the University's Facilities Master Plan.

### **2023: Men's and Women's Track and Women's Bowling**

In 2023 the plan includes the addition of Men's

and Women's track. This expansion includes only distance running but would expand our student athletes by fourteen. The addition of track will also assist in the recruitment of cross-country athletes. Women's Bowling will also be added the additional 15 student-athletes will further assist the department in reaching it's Title IX goals.

### **2024: Co-ed Esports and Expansion of Track and Cross Country**

Esports is one of the fastest growing collegiate competitive activities. The necessitated Esports lounge offers incredible benefit to the campus beyond the athletic department. Esports lounges routinely rank as the highest interest point on student tours. In addition to the competitive collegiate competition, this Esports lounge would be able to service the entire GSU student body and give the University much needed recreational opportunities for students. Like outdoor sports facilities, an Esports lounge would earn revenue by hosting high school and collegiate events. As Esports is an emerging sport whose interest outstrip its availability, it can be expected that it will draw additional students to Prairie Place.

Track will be expanded by offering more events. Cross Country will see an expansion to 15 members per team.

### **2025: Women's Softball and Expansion of Co-ed Esports and Track**

Women's Softball is one of the most played women's competitive sports in the nation. Locally, high school softball participation is especially high which correlates positively to strong recruitment and retention numbers. Intercollegiate Softball would require the identification of a suitable rental facility for games and practice as well as an indoor practice facility for hitting, pitching, and fielding. Softball will add an additional twenty-five student athletes.

Esport numbers will be expanded by adding additional game titles. Track will be expanded to include field events.

## 2026: Men's Baseball

Americas pastime would be added to GSU in 2026/2027. This would not only add an additional thirty student athletes but would also add what would surely be a well-attended spectator sport to GSU if we could host home events in proximity to the campus. Like softball an event and practice facility would need to be rented.

Throughout the master plan implementation, Athletics will continue to assess program popularity and the ability to recruit. If supported by data, some changes in sport programs may be recommended to senior leadership.

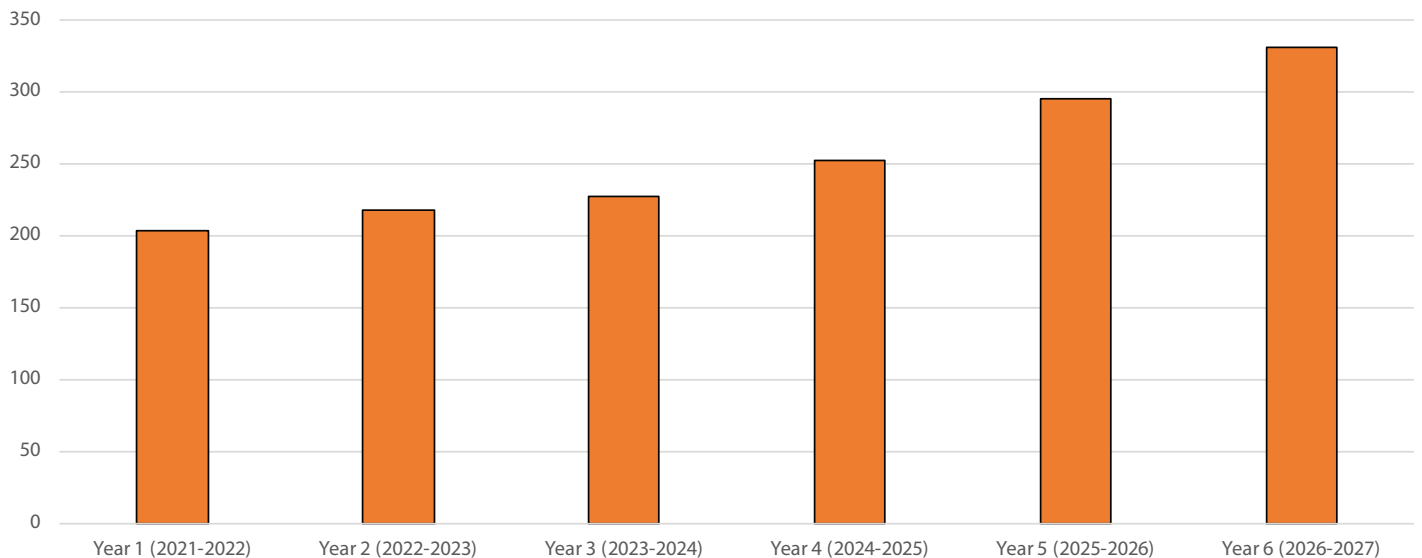
Currently, the department supports 9 intercollegiate sports and 109 student athletes. As additional sports are introduced to GSU, staffing will need to be scaled. This five-year plan calls for nearly 330 student-athletes by 2025-2027. Current athletic administration and support staffing levels are

identical to when the department had less than 70 student athletes. Full time coaching positions will need to be considered especially for programs with varsity reserve components. In addition to sport instruction, head coaches are responsible for supporting the academic and personal well-being of all student-athletes.

The addition of men's and women's soccer in 2019-2020 highlighted the need for additional support staff. Men's and women's soccer, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's golf and volleyball all compete in the fall. Simultaneously running events are unavoidable and severely stretch our medical, sports information and game operations staff. Furthermore, men's and women's basketball seasons also partially overlap. Collegiate sports teams generally compete roughly 1/3-1/2 of the academic year, but train and practice the majority of the fall and spring semester necessitating the coordination of medical treatment and usage of on and off campus facilities.

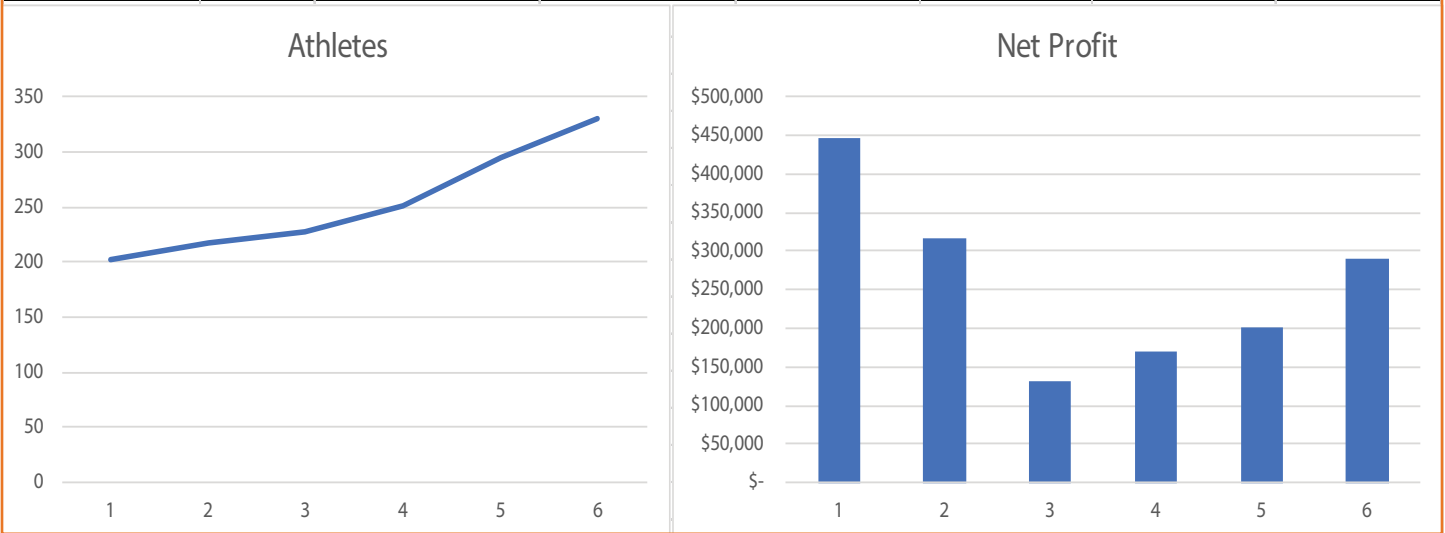
## GSU ATHLETICS 5 YEAR PLAN ADDITIONS BY YEAR

Year	Athletes	Action Item
Year 1 (2021-2022)	203	Addition of VR: Men's Basketball, Men's and Women's Soccer, and Women's Volleyball
Year 2 (2022-2023)	218	Addition of VR: Women's Basketball
Year 3 (2023-2024)	227	Addition of Women's Bowling and Men's and Women's Track
Year 4 (2024-2025)	252	Addition of Co-Ed Esports; Expansion of Men's and Women's Track and Cross Country
Year 5 (2025-2026)	295	Addition of Women's Softball; Expansion of Co-Ed Esports and track and field to include field events.
Year 6 (2026-2027)	330	Addition of Men's Baseball



# Five Year Financial Concept

Year	Athletes	Tuition & Fees	Housing	Gross Profit	Waiver (100%)	Operations	Net Profit
Year 1 (2021-2022)	203	\$ 2,468,886	\$ 483,069	\$ 2,951,955	\$ 1,160,399	\$ 1,345,200	\$ 446,356
Year 2 (2022-2023)	218	\$ 2,651,316	\$ 518,764	\$ 3,170,080	\$ 1,246,143	\$ 1,608,245	\$ 315,692
Year 3 (2023-2024)	227	\$ 2,760,774	\$ 540,181	\$ 3,300,955	\$ 1,297,589	\$ 1,870,781	\$ 132,585
Year 4 (2024-2025)	252	\$ 3,064,824	\$ 599,672	\$ 3,664,496	\$ 1,440,495	\$ 2,053,849	\$ 170,152
Year 5 (2025-2026)	295	\$ 3,587,790	\$ 701,997	\$ 4,289,787	\$ 1,686,294	\$ 2,401,331	\$ 202,162
Year 6 (2026-2027)	330	\$ 4,013,460	\$ 785,070	\$ 4,798,530	\$ 1,886,280	\$ 2,621,281	\$ 290,969



## FINANCIAL CONCEPT

This figures below are intended to illustrate how the athletic department of GSU generates revenue against its expenses. Revenue was calculated using the most up-to-date tuition, fee and housing rates. In an effort to be reliable, an analysis was done to see how many credits athletes actually take. It was found that undergraduate student-athletes average 28 credits per academic year. Historically, 35% of student-athletes are housed on campus. Housing revenue assumes all residents stay in traditional dorm style rooms while in reality a large portion of student-athletes reside in the apartment style rooms that generate several thousand more per occupant.

The table below includes operational costs based on current spending, plus the costs for each additional sport on the breakout tables. (Data available upon request.) Staffing costs are salary only. As new sports programs are added, several part time positions are moved to full time to support

students and the athletic infrastructure. These positions include Athletic Director in year two, Associate Athletic Director for Student Success in year three, Associate Athletic Director for Compliance in year four. The AAD for Student Success will be responsible for assisting students in maintaining GPA's, retention and graduate rates.

The NAIA sets waiver limits per sport in the form of full cost of attendance scholarships allowed. Using the NAIA's rules, a full time scholarship equivalent can be calculated. The five year plan seeks to allow enough resources for GSU teams to be regionally competitive while balancing the need for fiscal responsibility. The five-year plan assigns 25% of the official in-state GSU cost of attendance per student-athlete for athletic waivers. This is extremely favorable compared to other NAIA institutions. An analysis of all like athletic departments within the NAIA found that the median discount rate was 35%. (Data available upon request.)





## FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

Governors State currently hosts three out of nine sports on campus, Men's and Women's basketball and Women's volleyball. The Athletics Department is working with GSU's Facilities Department and Demonica Kemper Architects (DKA) to develop a cohesive and sustainable plan for hosting additional sports on campus. This will provide GSU's Facilities Department the ability to study, plan and incorporate athletic fields into the University's Facilities Master Plan. The planning and development of new athletic fields/courts should be based on the number of athletes impacted, the ability to host sports camps for recruitment and supplemental revenue, and provide a resource for the community.

If the Facilities Planning Group calls for outdoor fields, consideration should be given to artificial grass. This would allow for consistent play throughout the season and help avoid player injury under poor playing conditions. It is assumed that supporting locker rooms and other appropriate facilities

will be included.

In addition, on-campus sports fields will result in a larger percentage of student-athletes living on campus. This will further increase the financial return to Governors State University.

Consideration may also want to be given to the A-Building. The current facilities were not designed for student athlete use during home games. Students are unable to use the locker rooms for the fitness center or pool. The A-Building also lacks a separate locker-room for referees.

In addition to building collegiate sports fields for competition, Athletics will host showcase camps and special events. These showcases will generate revenue, but will also serve as recruitment opportunities for GSU. The showcases will allow student-athletes a chance to see GSU firsthand and will increase the chances of signing these student-athletes. It will also give the university the ability to highlight the campus and new facilities.

## CLOSING AND BENEFITS

We gratefully acknowledge this five-year plan would not have been possible without the input of many stakeholders across the University. GSU's greatest strength is its inclusive and diverse community. The efforts to shape the future of Jaguar Athletics would not be possible without the passion and dedication of our student-athletes, coaches, staff, facility, administration, alumni and fans. We recognize the ambitious pace we are blazing for growth and are excited for the challenges of the journey before us. The hard work and perseverance that we are known for on the field will be critical to the success of this plan. Together we will make a difference on the court, in the classroom and within our community through growth in these four tenets:

### 1. FINANCIAL

The financial benefits to the University will be felt through the steady increased tuition and fees as well as room and board. Return on Athletics metrics will give the administration annual data showing the Universities net return on investment. As outdoor sport facilities are added, additional revenue streams from rentals, camps, clinics and showcase event will increase revenue. Over time, positive experiences brought about by properly funded teams will result in alumni and donors giving back to the athletic program.

### 2. ACADEMIC

As the department continues to expand, an emphasis on recruits being college ready and highly motivated to graduate will permeate recruitment. Team and department-wide GPAs of 3.00+ are the expectation. In return, the athletic department will use its resources to support these students through academic monitoring and facilitation of GSU academic support on campus. The soon to be created full time Assistant Athletic Director for Student success will develop and facilitate a plan for increased student support. The result will be an increase in the overall GPA, retention and graduation rates of the department.

### 3. ATHLETIC

The need to produce winning Varsity programs is integral to the success of the five-year plan. The five-year plan normalizes the distribution of waiver dollars across the department while bringing the level of funding closer

to the 50% percentile of like NAIA Universities. Winning programs will attract and retain top level athletes able to meet the stated goals of winning conference championships and establishing GSU as regionally competitive. Winning programs will better the experience for the GSU community as well as attract fans, future students and donors from the greater University Park area. The Jaguar brand will be enhanced and campus pride will swell. To fully leverage this success, on campus facilities will need to be built as determined by the Master Facility Plan. Top level coaching talent will need to be attracted and retained. These professionals will need to be master recruiters, experts in their given sports and also capable of supporting the academic and overall well-being of each athlete. This combination of talents is rare and will only be attracted if programs are given the minimum resources required to win championships.

### 4. COMMUNITY

The benefits to the campus community will be felt in terms of school pride, gained friendships and engaging shared experiences that are an integral part of the college experience. GSU athletes also perform multiple works of community service each year. An additional 200 student-athletes will allow the department to spread even more positive goodwill throughout the greater University Park area. The community at large and local papers will have more opportunities to follow and interact with GSU in a positive way. A high interest level exists in these sports within the local community. The addition of new sports and the expansion into VR teams will allow more local high school athletes to continue their sports dreams at GSU.

The path is clear. We know the way.  
The **BEST** is **AHEAD** for Jaguar Nation!



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