



TO: Student Fee Review Board (SFRB)

FROM: Eddie Nuñez, Director of Athletics

DATE: July 24, 2020

RE: Emergency Funding Request for FY21

To Whom It May Concern:

Below please find Athletics Emergency Funding Request for FY21 from the Student Fee Review Board:

- 1. Briefly explain the areas that you intend on prioritizing and allocating the SFRB funding towards (after 18.36% cut).**

Funding from the Student Fee Review Board will continue to address the number one priority within the Department of Athletics which are the student-athletes. While funding levels have been reduced throughout the department, Athletics responsibility to its student-athletes remains unchanged. In fact, Athletics obligation to the well-being and safety of student-athletes has never been more important as Athletics strives to provide a safe environment for student-athletes returning to school and sport amidst a global pandemic.

SFRB funds will continue to be used to offset costs associated with student-athlete support including scholarships, textbooks, medical insurance, and other essential student related costs such as equipment, nutrition, and team travel to competition.

- 2. What areas will not receive funding due to the budget cut? Why are these critical to your operations?**

Athletics is significantly impacted in its ability to generate revenue amidst the pandemic. Volatile revenue sources such as ticket sales, sponsorship, fundraising, and more have been, and will continue to be, significantly affected as a result of COVID-19. In addition to these revenue losses, the 18.36% reduction in student fees negatively impacts Athletics to the tune of (\$603,179.00). No single cut to the organization can substantiate this level of funding. To cut the organization over \$600,000.00 will require a number of painful decisions and reductions.

Unfortunately, employment opportunities available to both undergraduate and graduate students may have to be significantly reduced as a result of the cut to Athletics' SFRB Funding. UNM Athletics was proud to employ and fund over 50 undergraduate students and 18 graduate assistantships over the course of the 2019-20 academic year. Student employees are critical to our operation as we seek to remain engaged with the campus community while also providing pathways to academic and career growth. Athletics will continue to support, to the best of its ability, funding for student employee and graduate assistantship positions, but must grapple with dwindling resources.

Team travel budgets to away competition will also be evaluated carefully. While playing seasons remain unknown as a result of COVID-19, there is a strong likelihood that a bulk of travel expenses will still be incurred, as usual, even if postponed to the Spring of 2020. Funding for team travel is vital to the overall mission of UNM Athletics, to compete in intercollegiate competition and serve as a sense of pride for the University of New Mexico, City of Albuquerque, and State of New Mexico. Cutting team travel budgets potentially puts UNM Athletics at a Title IX risk as great strides have been made over the past couple of years to increase opportunities available for female student-athletes. A reduction to team travel budgets will adversely affect the travel rosters of many sports programs.

Prior to the 18.36% cut to student fees for Athletics, UNM ranked 9 out of 11 for funding derived from student fees and campus support amongst its Mountain West peers (Hulet, 2020). The funding gap amongst our peers has continued to place UNM at a disadvantage both competitively and financially. Notwithstanding, the last possible cost containment measure will be to evaluate sports programs and sponsorship. In 2018, UNM reduced its sports programming from 20 to 18 sports. The NCAA minimum number of sponsored sports is 16. Universities across the country have eliminated entire sports programs and staffs as funding has been reduced as a result of COVID-19. An example from the Mountain West includes Boise State which permanently cut both its Baseball and Swimming & Diving programs, negatively affecting over 60 student-athletes in the process. All sports programs within the department contribute to Athletics mission of recruiting and developing student-athletes of all backgrounds. Therefore, retaining sports programming at current levels is critical to the operation.

3. How will you use the emergency funding (if awarded), to address your critical needs?

Emergency Funding will be prioritized to protect the student experience, for both students who work in the department to advance their careers and student-athletes who have elected to represent the University of New Mexico on a national and global scale. These funds will be used to mitigate any potential cuts to student employment, mitigate potential cuts to team travel which could adversely affect Title IX progress, and to retain sports programming at current levels.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or concerns. Thank you.

/s/ Eddie Nuñez, Director of Athletics