

TO: Athletic Committee

FROM: Doug Bennett and Nelson Bingham

RE: A Review of our Overall Approach to Athletics

DATE: August 23, 2004

We request that you undertake a review of our overall approach to athletics in light of the college's mission, with particular attention to clarifying three matters:

- (1) our goals in relation to Earlham's mission,
- (2) the opportunities we provide in intercollegiate athletics, and
- (3) the other opportunities we provide for participation in athletics.

We know you will want to seek input from others in the Earlham community. We hope you may have, by spring break, something that can be discussed by the Faculty. We are expecting that your recommendations will subsequently be discussed by the Board of Trustees.

(1) Our goals in relation to Earlham's mission

We ask that you write a statement about why athletics is part of our mission similar in form to the statement we wrote about religious life a few years ago. Such a statement will give us a foundation for making decisions about programs and priorities. Attached are three catalog statements regarding athletics at Earlham, from 1953-54, 1963-65, and 2003-04. The statements are noticeably different one from another. All three statements stress educational goals, but the earlier ones put an emphasis on opportunities for all while the current statement puts the focus largely on intercollegiate athletics.

In developing a fresh statement about athletics as part of our mission, we ask that you provide wide opportunities for input from others in the college community. Once drafted, it should be considered for approval by the faculty and the board of trustees.

(2) The opportunities we provide in intercollegiate athletics

If it were only up to us, we would likely shape the world of intercollegiate athletics along different lines than it takes today. We can only, however, make choices from among the present options given to us. As a second task, and working with the guidance of the statement about the proper role of athletics at Earlham, we ask that you review the choices we have made with regard to intercollegiate athletics. More specifically we ask that you consider these questions:

(a) Should we be competing in the sports in which we now compete? Should we consider any changes?

(b) What criteria should we use in considering which sports to offer? (A draft list of criteria is attached for your consideration).

(c) Should we continue to compete in the North Coast Athletic Conference? We all agree, I believe, that we like the conference's values. We also all agree, I think, that within NCAC we are unlikely to attain the level of competitive success we have set for ourselves (over all sports, over time, win as many contests as we lose, and be competitive for a championship in at least one sport each year). How should we resolve this tension?

(3) The other opportunities we provide for participation in athletics

In addition to the opportunities we provide students to participate in intercollegiate athletics, are we providing the right additional opportunities for students to participate in athletics, particularly in club sports and intramurals.

At present, considering both budgets and staff time, we devote very minimal resources both to club sports and to intramural athletics. I gather, for example, that we ask club sports to seek funding from the student activity fee rather than provide them with funds from the operating budget.

Should we provide more opportunities or better support?

## SPORTS AND RECREATION 1953-54

In accord with its purpose, that of educating the whole person for effective living, Earlham College maintains a varied program of sports in which recreation takes on academic dignity through being related to courses of study that involve classroom and laboratory expression.

Earlham is concerned that its intercollegiate and intramural activities shall be organized in such a way as to provide opportunity for appropriate physical activity for all students, including those without conspicuous physical strength or athletic prowess.

For both men and women there is a comprehensive schedule of intramural events with numerous tournaments, meets, sports nights and free hours for informal play in tennis, golf, shuffleboard, badminton, volleyball, softball, handball, and many other games.

Earlham does not direct its activities toward developing a few super-athletes or providing commercial athletic spectacles. At the same time it does believe that competitive intercollegiate athletics have a wholesome place in student life, provided excesses and abuses are avoided and the athletic experience is made an integral part of the student's preparation for citizenship. Therefore it sends its teams into competition with the representatives of other colleges of comparable size, primarily in the Middle West. It endeavors to conduct its sports, including football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis, swimming, cross-country, volleyball, soccer and hockey on a strictly amateur and educational basis.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION 1963-65

In accord with its purpose of educating the whole person for effective and satisfying living, Earlham maintains a wide program of diverse sports and recreation.

Active participation in a properly conducted sports program is salutary to the development of many positive qualities. The maintenance of good health, development of physical skills and coordination, appreciation by and for his fellow man, help the student to perform at an optimum level in all endeavors, and enjoy an increased zest for his college experience.

The first responsibility of the college in this area is to instruct students in the fundamentals of traditional and popular sports. This background training provides three levels of active participation.

The first level encompasses all activities of the physical education classes which are required of first-year students.

The second level involves the increased pace of the intramural program in which a large percentage of students voluntarily participates.

A full program in ten inter-collegiate sports provides intensive competition with comparable teams for all who are able and interested. Each year more than 40% of Earlham men participate at this level.

Although Earlham's interest is in providing maximum recreation opportunity for every student, the College is also interested in having good men with competent athletic skill come to the campus. Such men have contributed significantly throughout the years to make high-level competition an Earlham tradition.

In order to meet the broad sports interests of student from various parts of the country the College goes to considerable effort and expense to provide a wide variety of intramural and intercollegiate sports. Earlham is alert to encouraging new sports whenever there is adequate interest and opponents with whom to play. Earlham's program strength is in its provision for all.

## ATHLETIC LIFE 2003-04

Earlham College values intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of a liberal arts education. A conscientiously designed varsity athletic program can offer practical expression of the belief in the individual's integrity, wholeness and potential for excellence and in the commitment of the individual to a community of persons with a common goal. The training, exercise, and enjoyment of the mind and body, and the discipline of a cooperation and competition that athletic experience can promote are essential aspects of a liberal education. Varsity athletics offers that experience to individuals who wish to prepare seriously for competitive intercollegiate challenges. In combination with other competitive levels - activity classes, intramurals, and club sports - the total athletic program complements and enhances the academic and social experiences of a liberal arts education.

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Earlham embraces intercollegiate athletic competition as a learning experience which requires each participant to strive to excel, and according to the sport, to cooperate with team members and other contestants in an event defined by established rules and expectations. The peak experiences for which athletes will be prepared and which we hope they will strive to experience is the union of mind, body and spirit in the competitive moment or encounter.

To become involved in Athletics at Earlham, contact the Athletics Office, x1411. Staff and coaches can provide you with information on current intramural sports or connect you with the coach of your favorite sport. Within reasonable limits, Earlham will provide a variety of varsity sports to satisfy the variety of student interests and will assure that men and women have equal opportunity to develop excellence in sports of their choice.

## PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING EARLHAM'S INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORTS

### Primary Considerations

1. Can we recruit, admit, enroll and retain student athletes to play the sport who are well qualified in other regards for an Earlham education?
2. Can we hire and retain coaches who are well qualified in other regards for a place on the Earlham faculty?
3. Can we compete effectively in the sport with other colleges we can schedule, generally through our membership in an athletic conference?
4. Is the culture of the sport, on and off the field, consistent with Earlham's values? Is the culture of the sport consistent with good sportsmanship, among both players and fans?
5. Do we have, or can we have, adequate facilities for competition in the sport?
6. On a per-student basis, considering all associated costs and revenues, can Earlham afford the sport?
7. Does it support or is it consistent with an emphasis on wellness, both while the students are participating in the sport as students, and in their lives after graduation?
8. Does the array of sports we are offering provide equal opportunities for women and men?

### Secondary Considerations

9. Does it have positive interactions with other sports?
10. Does it spark interest and support from other students, and from faculty and staff?
11. Does it have continuing interest and support from alumni?