

TO: Athletic Committee

FROM: Doug Bennett

RE: Request: a review of our athletic intern program

DATE: September 12, 2007

I would like to ask you to review our athletic intern program and make recommendations about whether and how we should continue this program.

Background

We began the Athletic Intern program in 1997-98, and in February 1999 incorporated the program into the college's Repositioning Plan. I am attaching to this memo the statement of the program from the Repositioning Plan. I take this to be the clearest authoritative statement of what we are trying to accomplish and how.

The program is now a decade old, and a number of questions have arisen about whether we are accomplishing our intended purposes with these positions. For example, at a quick glance we do not appear to be regularly fulfilling our recruitment expectations for intercollegiate sports, and there are recurring requests that we employ particular interns for more than two years.

Questions

1. Should we continue to expect that these positions have admissions recruiting as a central purpose?
2. Who should have general oversight of the athletic interns? Who should be responsible for the recruitment (hiring), training, and day-to-day supervision of these positions?
3. Do we have the best configuration for these positions? Should we continue to think of these positions as internships? Do we continue to think that no one should be an intern for more than two years?
4. Are we continuing to evaluate the success of the athletic intern program? What should we do when a position underperforms?
5. Are there other issues we should address around the staffing of intercollegiate sports?

I ask you to address these questions with an assumption that we are not going to provide a net increase in the compensation budget for intercollegiate athletics. Since the college is fully enrolled, such a request would be tantamount to increasing the relative share of the college's budget that goes to intercollegiate athletics.

From the 1999 Earlham College Repositioning Plan

Initiative 1: An Athletic Intern Program

Description of project. This project entails the creation of nine athletic intern positions within the Department of Athletics, Wellness and Physical Education. The purposes of these new positions are, primarily, to enhance recruiting of student-athletes and, secondarily, to strengthen coaching and academic support of student-athletes as a means of improving retention. These interns will be entry-level post-B.A. positions, typically for one- or two-year periods.

The nine proposed athletic intern positions are associated with the following sports or combinations of sports: 1) men's basketball, 2) women's basketball, 3) baseball, 4) men's and women's track and cross-country, 5) football, 6) men's soccer, 7) women's soccer, 8) field hockey and lacrosse, and 9) volleyball. These interns will assist coaches in all phases of recruiting (identifying prospects, establishing and maintaining relationships with prospects, families, and coaches, making school visits, phoning prospects, arranging campus visits) and in all aspects of coaching (including providing academic support and assistance in adjustment to college).

Initially, it was planned to have eleven such interns, with a phased implementation so that five would be hired in 1997-98 and six more in 1998-99. In fact, there are only nine interns on contract in 1998-99. In one case (men's and women's tennis), the proposed intern position was combined with an existing part-time coaching position to create a single, full-time men's and women's tennis coach position. In a second case, we have been unable to recruit and hire an intern in 1998-99 for field hockey/lacrosse. Additionally, one intern has been hired to work with the athletic trainer — a move which was necessary by non-recruiting considerations, but which does not fit within the purposes of recruiting required for this project. Accordingly, if the athletic trainer intern position is to be continued beyond 1998-99, funding for it will have to come from other college sources. That position is not a part of this re-positioning proposal.

Project Outcomes. This project aims at achieving and sustaining optimum team size for each of the 15 varsity sports which Earlham offers (seven for men, eight for women) while simultaneously enhancing the academic and athletic experience of each student-athlete. These optimum sizes have been determined by the athletic director in consultation with the coaches and the athletic committee. They are presented in Table 6. Optimum size of a team may be attained through a combination of increased recruiting/enrollment and improved retention, with the specific emphasis for each sport to be determined by the coach in collaboration with the athletic director.

Any effort to enhance recruiting will entail increases in the number of applications by student-athletes, which, in turn, will generally necessitate boosting the number of athletic recruiting contacts. Average recruiting numbers (per sport) for 1985-96 and recruiting goals for 1997-98 may be seen in Table 6. Table 6 also shows the actual numbers of recruits (per sport) for 1997-98. An historical picture of athletic recruiting contacts since 1990 is shown in Table 7.

As shown in Table 3a, this project will enroll 31 additional student-athletes each year (119 enrollees as compared to the 1995 baseline of 88 student-athletes). Tables 5a through 5e show the year-to-year impact of this project on total enrollment. Thus, as seen in Table 5e, by the year 2002-03, this project will add 101 students to our total enrollment (taking into account first-year through senior enrollment and projecting attrition losses in each class).

Evaluation of Project. Ongoing assessment of this project will be built into the evaluation by the athletic director each year (by December 1st) of each coach/intern. Factors taken into account in this evaluation will include progress toward attainment of optimum team size, total number of enrolled student-athletes in the entering class, success in retention of student-athletes, recruiting contact numbers (total contacts and number of different prospects contacted), number of prospect inquiries, number of prospects making campus visits, and number of student-athlete applications. In general, progress will be measured in relation to the 1995-96 baseline figures contained in Table 6 (with due allowance for the circumstances of particular sports). If less-than-satisfactory intern performance has occurred, improvement will be expected the following year to avoid cancellation of that intern position.

The cost effectiveness of this project can only be estimated on the basis of an assumption that the enrollment of the additional 101 students in 2002-03 can be attributed solely to the work of these interns. Clearly, this is far too simplistic and, indeed, no evaluative analysis is available to us to measure the separate impact of each recruiting influence on a given student. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this project involves expenditures of \$1929 for each enrolled student, which seems to be an acceptable figure, particularly when considering the other, non-recruiting, benefits of these interns.

Project Costs. This project will cost \$180,000 for 1998-99. This includes both salary/benefit expenses (about \$160,000 this year) and operating expenses (primarily recruiting costs) of approximately \$20,000 for the current year. It is projected that these costs will increase by 2% per year over the next five years (see Table 1).

Table 6
ATHLETIC RECRUITING DATA

Sport	Hist. Avg Recruits 1985-96	Hist. Avg Team Size 1988-97	1998 Team Size	Optimum Team Size	Intern Goals *	1998 Recruits	1998 Gap
M's C/C	4.4	14	10	16	5	3	-2
W's C/C	4.4	12	19	16	5	6	+1
F.Hock.	3.7	17	16	20	7	7	+2
Football	16.4	51	65	75	25	36	+11
M's Soc	12.0	29	27	28	10	11	+1
W's Soc	6.6	24	22	25	8	7	-1
V'Ball	4.0	11	10	15	6	3	-3
Baseball	4.8	19	24	25	8	11	+3
M B'Ball	4.4	13	14	18	8	6	-2
W B'Ball	3.4	11	9	15	6	2	-4
Lacrosse	4.3	18	14	20	7	4	-3
M Tennis	2.2	7	11	12	4	4	0
W Tennis	4.0	9	8	12	4	3	-3
M Track	6.7	19	20	22	8	6	-2
W Track	6.7	15	23	22	8	7	-1
Totals	88	269	292	336	119	116	-3

* Intern goal means minimum total new recruits to justify continuation of intern. These goal numbers, in fact, are the goals for each team, representing the combined efforts of the coach(es) and the intern.

FALL SPORTS TOTALS

Squad

First-Year Students

1997-98

160

59

1998-99

169

73

SPRING SPORTS TOTALS

Squad

First-Year Students

1997-98

123

38

1998-99