

2014

Pace University Athletics: Increasing Profitability and Performance

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PACE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS: INCREASING
PROFITABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

BY

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
DYSON COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
PACE UNIVERSITY

MAY 2014

APPROVED BY _____
Advisor

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Abstract

This preliminary research evaluates the profitability and performance of the Pace University Athletics Department. Various students, faculty and staff within Pace University were surveyed to explore current perspectives of Pace Athletics and its effects on the university. By utilizing the research literature, feedback, and suggestions from the Pace community, this research is geared to address three questions:

1. How can Pace Athletics increase revenue using their existing workforce?
2. What strategies can Pace Athletics employ to build and maintain support from their alumni population and outside community?
3. How can Pace Athletics increase the support they receive from the University (including faculty and staff).

Simple surveys and document analysis were used to learn more about the current relationship between Pace Athletics, the university it serves and its potential for growth. The paper concludes with recommendations and internal areas that need further analysis.

Keywords: Alumni; athletics; higher education; Pace University; Pace Athletics; performance; profitability; revenue.

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Research Problem

College athletic programs play a key, and necessary, role in a well-rounded experience for students in higher education. Within the top universities across America, successful sports programs pour millions of dollars into their universities' coffers (Simplicio, 2011). Athletic departments not only affect institutions' student populations, but also their student recruitment and retention, funding and the surrounding communities. Due to apparent lack of funding, support and revenue generation, the topic of proposed study will be *Pace University Athletics: Increasing Profitability and Performance*. There is much room for improvement within this department, especially with access to current trends and innovations within the sports world. Exploring and researching this problem in depth will provide Pace Athletics with resources that can lead to increased annual revenues, alumni support and enriched school morale. Despite the intrinsic benefits, however, many argue that sports or athletic competition is not the way to keep our colleges and universities thriving. With recent budget cuts and declining revenues country-wide, it is argued by some that athletic departments are an unnecessary component to the overall success of colleges and universities. With college tuition on the rise and student debt increasing every year, some debate that it is counterproductive to fund athletic programs. Some researchers believe eliminating athletic scholarships, removing staff positions and reducing the number of athletic teams are the most practical ways to prevent colleges from spending money (Bienen, 2012). In addition, many state that higher educational institutions should channel government subsidies and sponsorships toward academic programs as athletic programs are not essential to student development. Others in academia contend that athletic programs take money away from technologies and curricula used in the classroom, despite the great value athletic departments' offer both on and off the playing field. Politically, these perspectives have negative effects on

athletic departments, affecting their funding, faculty support and positive exposure within higher education.

Pace University is a comprehensive, independent university with campuses in New York City and Westchester County where nearly 13,000 students are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Athletically, the university is a member of the NCAA Division II Northeast-10 Conference that currently sponsors twelve intercollegiate sports. There is great potential for the athletics department of Pace to develop community support, increase annual revenues and garner a stronger alumni base. This topic is worth studying because Pace Athletics plays a vital role in a well-rounded college education. Socially, the department creates supplemental opportunities for students, faculty and alumni to gather and network. Athletics provides great potential for leadership development within the student body. Sensible risk-taking, time management, self-discipline, and teamwork are just some of the leadership and organizational traits students can develop through athletic competition and training. Lifetime friendships and memories are intangible benefits that athletic outlets provide to students. School spirit, pride and loyalty are also culturally significant as they are all tools that cultivate positive feelings and support toward an institution (Sternberg, 2013). Besides the student-centered benefits, Pace Athletics has an enormous potential to give back to their university through recruitment. Successful athletic programs also contribute to the fiscal health of their communities. Visitors who attend competitions, sporting events and athletic fundraisers increase revenue for local businesses, restaurants, hotels and other entities. The facility at Pace, the Goldstein Health, Fitness, & Recreation Center, provides outlets for local families and the surrounding community through discounted gym memberships, fundraisers and athletic-themed camps.

Various factors affect profitability and performance within collegiate athletic programs like that at Pace University. The purpose of conducting this study is to support Pace University through the platform of athletics. After this research is conducted, it is expected that marketing efforts, budget allocation, and alumni as well as community support, will be seen as factors that affect the level of success Pace Athletics reaches. The research will attempt to uncover central problems affecting Pace Athletics, in hopes of increasing performance and growing revenue. It will also answer the following questions below:

1. How can Pace Athletics increase revenue using their existing workforce?
2. What strategies can Pace Athletics employ to build and maintain support from their alumni population and outside community?
3. How can Pace Athletics increase the support they receive from the University (including faculty and staff)

By gathering the proper research literature and implementing appropriate methodologies, a proposed system for improvement will be developed for Pace Athletics to increase their profitability and ensure long term success.

Chapter 2: Review of the Research Literature

Staff and Revenue Generation

A number of variables affect the amount of success or failure an athletic department can have within a higher educational institutions. Research has shown that establishing effectiveness within athletic venues is feasible after qualified workers are able to contribute to the missions and goals of the department (Cunningham, 2002). For example, current trends have shown that more athletic directors and their staff now have business-centered backgrounds than their predecessors who held a director role after successful careers as football or basketball coaches (Welty Peachey, Burton, 2001). Various scholars have stated that successful college athletic programs generate a great deal of money. Such revenue in turn helps finance newer and bigger athletic facilities, better staffs, as well as university enterprises (Stuart, 2012). Studies have also shown that intercollegiate athletic programs have evolved during the past two decades into media-driven enterprises with dynamic athletic directors, full -time staff members and successful athletic conferences. The amount of revenue generation an athletic department creates can support new athletic programs, provide scholarships for students athletes, but more so give back to other departments within the institution not associated with athletics (Stinson J., Howard D., 2007). A significant variable relating to Pace Athletics and profitability is the efficiency of their current staff. How this department handles limitations they face, whether they are political or financial, has a substantial effect on the amount of revenue they generate, scholarships they offer student-athletes, and the quality of athletic facilities. Scholars have noted that athletic departments that fail to employ suitable staff can create poor relationships within the university and their surrounding community (Casper, Pfahl, McSherry, 2012). Poor relationships can result in a lack of university support, decrease of alumni investments, and the stoppage of athletic

department expansion. The NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) is a nonprofit association of 1,281 institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals that organizes the athletic programs of many colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Most colleges and universities rely on what the NCAA calls “allocated revenue,” or indirect support from general funds, student fees and government subsidies to support their athletics programs (Suggs, 2012). Once these proceeds run out, Pace Athletics must rely on the abilities of their workforce to generate additional income. Studies show that not only have intercollegiate athletics been the first of their kind to implement revolutionary fundraising trends, but also successful programs have implemented creative fundraising initiatives to address revenue loss (Cunningham, 2002). During the mid -1990’s, trends within larger collegiate athletic programs included offering personal seat licenses and luxury boxes at athletic venues. These novelties created opportunities for athletic departments to generate profits, increase fan loyalty and pour money back into athletic teams. In addition, many profitable and successful athletic departments are able to utilize their staff to generate revenue through sponsorship opportunities and television contracts to support their recruiting initiatives, equipment expenses, and department salaries (Lavigne, 2010). Studies have shown that when athletic sectors do not hire suitable staff, a separation is created between a university and athletics. This in turn creates reluctance within the overall institution to support athletic initiatives, resulting in lower university-funded programs, support or future investments (Casper, Pfahl, McSherry, 2012). In addition, scholars have stated that the level of success an athletics department gains is directly affected by how their existing staff can leverage existing resources to create new revenue streams (Welty Peachey, Burton, 2001). The “availability heuristic,” a term coined by psychologists, shows that when schools win championships or experience high levels of success, they give their schools regional or national

visibility they might not have received otherwise (Simplicio, 2011). By researching such instances, it is clear that Pace's athletic department and the staff they employ is an essential component to the generation of revenue, visibility and overall success of the university.

Alumni and Community Support

Athletic programs cannot thrive on their own accord, and research has shown that successful athletic programs are those that receive solid alumni support (Brooker, Klastorin, 1981). Literature also focuses on efforts athletics places on creating programs to build relationships within the university, its alumni population and the surrounding community. Stakeholder groups within higher education that have political and economic influence can impact reform and university-wide ventures. Athletic departments that are able to build relationships and focus on the concerns of alumni can directly affect influences that greatly affect the amount of alumni and community support a school receives in return. Scholars have also stated the importance of athletic institutions and staff being sensitive to the concerns of its alumni and constituencies, especially as many have the potential to provide vital financial and ethical support. (Putler, Wolfe, 1999). When done properly, such relationships create strong affiliations between the alumni and university, which over time may increase university success. Given the expenses involved in providing collegiate-level athletic programs, the need to strengthen the connection between athletics and donors and alumni is becoming increasingly urgent (Baade R, Sundberg J., 1996).

Thriving athletic departments have qualities in common, one of them being robust alumni support. Research and statistics show how media contracts, sponsorship and marketing efforts that channel alumni involvement within schools in the Big Ten Conference stand to reap a minimum of \$2.8 billion over the next twenty years (Weaver, 2011). Big name programs like

Kansas State, Virginia Tech and UCONN have developed worldwide alumni networks that contribute millions of dollars alone to their athletic functions annually. Pace Athletics should implement a solid plan that creates a supportive alumni network, which initially would provide a collection of secondary benefits for their donors. Scholars have shown that perceived benefits foster continued relationships with the institution as well as motivators for future financial contribution (Feezell, 2009). This domino effect draws the top athletic talent which results in increased applications and increased revenue. Moreover, Pace Athletics also has the opportunity to use sports as a catalyst to bring in revenue that will benefit the University as a whole. In addition to internal university support, the emphasis that is placed on relationship building between Pace Athletics and external community is important. Pace Athletics has the opportunity to leverage their facilities to create positive relationships and support from the village of Pleasantville. Pace Athletics generates over \$20 million in economic output annually to the local and regional community through ticket sales, visitor spending, tournament fees, royalties and licenses. Their facilities are utilized daily by hundreds of local residents who can participate in a wide range of affordably priced health and fitness activities for individuals of all ages. However, it is essential that staff within Pace Athletics continually creates new opportunities to leverage their facility to connect with the outside community and surrounding neighborhoods.

Faculty and Staff Support

Despite opportunity for growth, there are cases where professors and staff are not so supportive of athletic programs, as they feel athletics takes much needed financial resources from educational initiatives and programs that affect the larger student body. Once such example can be seen through the effects athletic success had at Gonzaga University, a Catholic four-year college in Spokane, Washington, founded in 1887. In 1998, the athletic department at Gonzaga

was not profitable and many faculty members strongly urged terminating their Division I basketball status to help the university economically. However, after Gonzaga's men's team began making successful appearances in the NCAA tournament the university saw fast growth in enrollment, donations and applications. Since 1998, twice as many students have applied to the university. The freshman class enrollment increased 65% within six years (Lieber, 2004). Increased enrollment has resulted in full dorms, full classes and nearly \$8.4 million from foundations and alumni. Without the support of their staff, it is questionable how much of an impact this would have had on the athletic culture within the university. The support, or lack thereof, Pace Athletics receives from its faculty and staff might play a vital role in the long term success of the department.

Conversely, unending support from professors, staff and students within institutions like Pace University can create a stimulating school-wide atmosphere that boosts university morale. Besides fiscal backing, university support might also include individuals volunteering at programs or community ventures sponsored by athletics, or even fan support at athletic games and competitions. The concept of the '12th man' was a term coined to document the impact fan support can have for college teams (Huguenin, 2014). Students, professors and staff at Texas A&M began using the term as their moniker in the 1920's, as their fans were notorious for creating loud sounds in hopes of distracting or confusing the opposing team. Building relationships that increase university support not only kindles competitive environments, but they also can create an atmosphere where school-wide support can flourish.

College athletics provide a key role in a well-rounded experience for students within higher education. Despite intrinsic benefits, many individuals feel that athletics within colleges and universities take the funding that is needed for students' scholastic benefit. However, studies

have shown that despite popular assumptions, successful athletic departments have the ability to unify the university, generate funding and give back to their local community. Pace Athletics has the ability to address all problems related to lack of funding and support. Using the topic of proposed study, *Pace University Athletics: Increasing Profitability and Performance*, various methods will be conducted to find ways to increase productivity and profits within the university.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Two simple surveys will be distributed to obtain data regarding the past and current levels of operation within Pace Athletics. The first survey will be distributed to at least ten individuals working within the offices and administration of the Athletic Department at Pace. The second survey will be distributed to at least 20 faculty, staff and 20 students within Pace University. These surveys will be randomly assigned to various departments in order to rule out bias or affiliation within the university. In addition, surveys will be distributed to students of all academic years, as it is important that every level of the student population is represented accurately. The majority of these simple surveys will be distributed electronically via direct email. The remaining surveys will be distributed to students in-person throughout various locations within the Pleasantville and White Plains campuses. A final method, document analysis, will be conducted. It will be comprised of newspaper clippings, and press releases that assess the status of Pace Athletics in regards to profitability and progress. With regard to limitations, there are no foreseeable or expected limitations in data collection. In addition, it is estimated to cost under \$20.00 to administer these surveys as few hard copy papers will be printed.

The table below represents questions asked within the survey given to Pace University students:

Table 1: Pace University Student Survey

| Population | Questions |
|--------------------------|--|
| Pace University Students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please indicate your current class • How often do you go to the Goldstein Health and Fitness Center? • What facilities in the Goldstein Health and Fitness Center do you use? • Which Pace University Team competitions did you attend last year? • Have you attended any Pace University team competitions held off campus? • In your opinion, how important are athletic programs to the life of a university? • On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the importance of Pace's athletic program to you as a student? • What improvements, if any, do you feel that Pace Athletics can make? |

The table below represents questions asked within the survey given to Pace University Faculty and Staff:

Table 2: Pace University Faculty and Staff Survey

| Population | Questions |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Pace University Faculty & Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been an employee at Pace University? • What are your overall thoughts, if any, about Pace University? • What are your overall thoughts, if any, about the Athletics Department at Pace University? • Do you utilize the Goldstein Health and Fitness Center in any way? If so, how? • Which team competitions, if any, have you attended last year? • On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the importance of Pace's athletic program to the university? • What improvements, if any do you feel that Pace Athletics should make? |

The table below represents questions asked within the survey given to Pace University Athletics and Staff:

Table 3: Pace University Athletics Staff Survey

| Population | Questions |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Pace University Athletics Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please check your current role • How much of an emphasis does Pace Athletics place on relationship-building within the University? (such as building relationships between athletics and students, faculty or alumni) • How strongly do you feel your role contributes to relationship-building within Pace University? (such as building relationships between athletics and students, faculty or alumni) • Do you utilize the Goldstein Health and Fitness Center in any way? If so, how? • Which team competitions, if any, have you attended last year? • On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the importance of Pace's athletic program to the university? • In your opinion, how effective are college sports in creating strategies to counteract the effects of diminishing revenue? (E.g. fundraising strategies, event creation, etc.) • How effective are Pace Athletics' strategies in response to diminishing revenue? (.e.g. fundraising strategies, event creation, etc.) • Rate the overall support (attendance at athletic competitions, events, etc.) you believe athletic programs at medium-sized schools receive (between 5,000 to 15,000 students) • Rate the overall support (attendance at athletic competitions, events, etc.) you believe Pace Athletics receives |

Once the results are analyzed, an analysis will be conducted to identify the athletic department's current strengths, weaknesses and opportunities with regard to each of the aforementioned topics:

1. Efficiency: Staffing practices of Pace Athletics and correlation to revenue generation
2. Effectiveness: Pace Athletics and its process for creating, maintaining and growing alumni and community support

3. Opportunities: Pace Athletics and the status, improvements and ability it has to increase university involvement

With these methods, combined with the additional literature reviews and observations, sufficient data will be collected in hopes of advising the department on better strategies and programs to improve the current profitability and performance status of the athletic department within Pace University.

Chapter 4: Findings

Two methods were conducted to collect data for this study. First, simple surveys were distributed to the following populations: Pace University students, Pace University faculty and staff, as well as the local community of Pleasantville, New York. Second, document analyses of newspaper clippings and press releases related to Pace Athletics were collected. Pace University students, faculty and staff were very receptive when asked to fill out surveys. Many of the survey responses provided valuable insight with regard to athletics and how it ??? the university as a whole. Regarding the local community, attempts to distribute and collect surveys were deemed unsuccessful. The following findings have been categorized based on their demographics.

Pace University Students

Pace University students were very responsive during the distribution and collection of questionnaires. Out of the 40 surveys distributed, 31 were returned. With this being the easiest demographic to distribute and collect responses from, it was decided to send out additional surveys electronically. A total of 25 hard copy surveys were handed out in person throughout the Kessel Student Center. After this collection, 15 surveys were distributed electronically to students representing various levels, schools and social circles. After collecting the responses, the following statistics were deemed significant for the purpose of this study:

- 45% of students did not attend any athletic competitions. Second to this percentage, 41% of students attended football games
- 90% of students did not attend any Pace University competitions held off campus
- Regarding the importance athletics plays in regards to life at a university, 36% of students felt athletics played a moderately important role, while 28% of students felt college athletics plays a considerably important role
- In its current state, 24% of students surveyed felt that the athletic program is significant in their student lives, rating athletics as a '7' out of 10.

Each survey was completed and special attention was paid to the improvements, if any, students felt the athletic department at Pace should make. The following comments represent a few of the responses documented:

- “Better teams, mostly football. Winning schools are always the most fun. More sociable and relaxed school sponsored events before games”
- “More publicity to make students and alumni aware of upcoming events”
- “Advertise to students by email”
- “More equipment in gym”
- “Have better teams. Work on school spirit”

Pace University Faculty & Staff

Pace University faculty and staff were also very responsive during the distribution and collection of surveys. Altogether, 20 surveys were distributed electronically and 17 of those surveys were returned. Individuals representing various departments, including Career Services, Security, Special Events and Information Technology were sampled to ensure results were not biased based on department. After collecting the responses, the following statistics were deemed significant for the purpose of this study:

- 50% of faculty and staff surveyed do not use the facilities at Goldstein Health and Fitness Center (e.g. swimming pool, weight room, gymnasium, or various fitness classes)
- Just over 80% of staff have not attended any varsity team competitions within the past academic year
- In its current state, 30% of faculty and staff surveyed felt that the athletic program is significant to the university, rating athletics as an “8” out of “10”.
- Conversely, 25% of faculty and staff surveyed felt that the athletic program is of enormous significance to the university, rating it a “10” out of 10”.

Most of the faculty and staff made mention that athletics should offer free benefits to staff and faculty, instead of the current membership charge. Specific quotes include:

- “I think the basketball team can start to scout for stronger players”
- “Reduce staff member costs and include family members at same cost”

- “Offer tickets, raffles... to increase engagement”
- “More NYC inclusion during peak times like homecoming”
- “With the current construction- I think we’re on the right track!”

Pace University Athletics Staff

Staff and various administrators within the Athletic Department at Pace University were also very responsive during the distribution and collection of surveys. Altogether, ten surveys were distributed electronically and eight of those surveys were returned. Surveys were distributed among individuals representing administration, sports medicine, media relations, external operations and coaching staff to ensure results were not biased based on department. After collecting the responses, the following statistics were deemed significant for the purpose of this study:

- 60% of athletic staff surveyed felt that little emphasis is placed on relationship-building between athletics and the university (such as building relationships between athletics, students, faculty or alumni)
- 60% of recipients felt that athletic programs have maximum impact on revenue-building within a university
- Within the individuals surveyed, about 40% felt that Pace Athletics’ strategies in response to diminishing revenue were only slightly affective
- While 60% of athletic staff surveyed felt medium-sized schools receive average support in regards to athletic competitions, about 80% of those surveyed felt that Pace Athletics receives low support in regards to athletic competitions and events

Local Community: Small Businesses

Despite outreach, feedback was not very responsive when conducting surveys throughout the local community in Pleasantville. Ten initial surveys were distributed in person to local businesses, with only three being completed during the first trip. Four individuals representing local small businesses did not want to fill out the survey. After at two visits to collect surveys from the remaining individuals, almost all said they did not have it or were unable to fill it out. In

order to improve returns a third attempt to visit other small businesses within the town of Pleasantville was conducted. However similar sluggish responses were found which made it difficult to collect the remaining responses.

Press Releases, Articles

A final method of document analysis was conducted. While speaking with an individual representing the financial sector of athletics, she mentioned that Pace Athletics generates enough revenue to basically sustain its building and daily operations. Such revenue does not produce enough support to provide the varsity teams with adequate funds for travel, equipment, and other related costs they need to sustain themselves. As a result, it is often the responsibility of student-athletes, coaching staff and administration to develop programs or fundraising initiatives to sustain Pace Athletic varsity teams. The highest source of income Goldstein Health and Fitness Center receives is due to swimming programs and lessons. During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, swimming lessons offered by Pace generated \$408,837.00 for Pace Athletics. Second to that figure, overall gym memberships offered to Pace University faculty and staff, as well as the outside community totaled about \$272,614.00. In addition to this figure, only \$12,564.00 was generated from concession stand sales including food and beverage purchases during athletic competitions throughout the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

One current fundraising initiative used to generate revenue for varsity sports programs at Pace University is called The Setters Club. The Setters Club is considered the fundraising arm of the Pace University Athletics Department. The mission of the Setters Club is to generate funds to support each intercollegiate team while boosting school spirit and alumni relations. The program is piloted by coaches and student-athletes, who are responsible for reaching out to family, friends and supporters in hopes of securing donations for their respective teams. Another

fundraising initiative involves golf tournaments that Pace Athletics has created to garner support. Each fall semester Pace Athletics holds the golf classic, an event that serves as an opportunity for alumni and friends to enhance, support and encourage the academic and athletic growth of Pace student-athletes. Proceeds from the event are used to improve the student-athlete experience, initiate facility improvements and build on the future of Pace University Athletics. The athletics department will also be hosting its first Golf Challenge on April 28th, 2014. Similarly to the Golf Classic held in the fall, the spring tournament will serve as another opportunity for alumni and friends to enhance, support and encourage the academic and athletic growth of Pace student-athletes. However, proceeds from this event will directly benefit the varsity sports program of the attendees' choice.

Current news also includes the expansion that will affect Pace Athletics and the university as a whole. On March 21st, Pace Athletics announced that Andron Construction and Osports will be in charge of building and design for the Athletic component of the Master Plan revitalization of the Pleasantville Campus at Pace University. Osports has decades of sports and recreation design and planning experience dating back to 1909. They have designed some of the nation's most famous venues including the original Fenway Park, Yankee Stadium, Cleveland Municipal Stadium and old Comiskey Park. The renovations of the Pleasantville master plan includes the restoration of Peter X. Finnerty Field with a turf surface and lights for night games. In addition, Pace Field, currently the home field for Pace Football and Men's Lacrosse will be renovated to a synthetic surface with lights, approximately 1,000 seats and a new press box. The new fields will be the home for the Pace Football, Baseball, Women's Soccer, Women's Field Hockey, Men's Lacrosse and Women's Lacrosse teams. Other athletics-related improvements will include a new softball field behind Dyson Hall to replace the field currently on the Briarcliff

campus and construction of a varsity field house with locker rooms, administrative offices, a varsity weight room, sports medicine training facilities and a VIP Room overlooking the field.

Finally, it was found that no emphasis has been placed on relationships with former student-athletes who are a component of the Pace Alumni network. Pace University has an alumni database comprised of more than 136,000 alumni world-wide. Former student-athletes only make up about 3,000 of that population. Until the past few years, the Alumni Relations department at Pace had joined athletics to create programs in hopes of strengthening relationships between former student-athletes and the university. It has been noted that former athletes would rather hear from individuals representing athletics when being approached to give back to the university. Most recently, events like Career Super Panel, Alumni Days and feature stories, also known as Setter Spotlights, have been created in an attempt to increase engagement levels and enhance the alumni experience. During FY2012, Pace Athletics received \$0 funds from endowments, which would include scholarships, faculty support/professorships, or other related endowments. The following year, FY2013 brought \$50,250.00 in funds in scholarships from endowments. However, in this area athletics still falls way behind other schools and departments. The diagrams below demonstrate the amount of alumni support received from various schools throughout the university in relation to athletics:

Figure 1: FY2012 Endowment Amounts Received per School

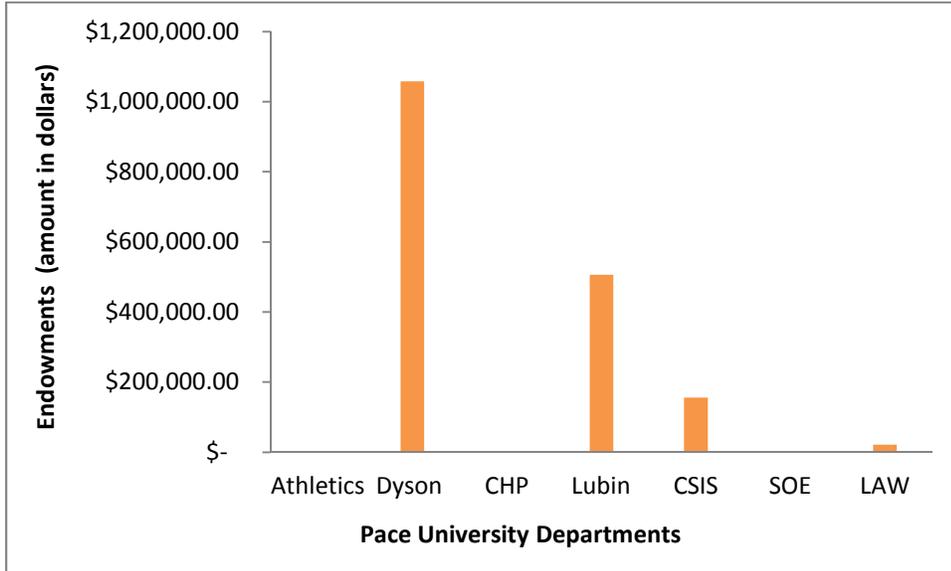
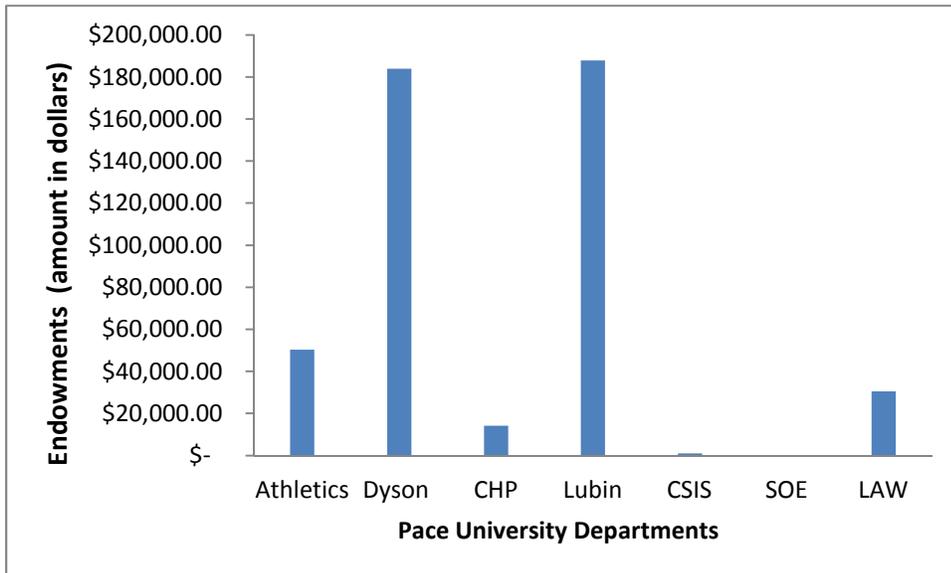


Figure 2: FY2013 Endowment Amounts Received per School



As seen from figures one and two, Pace Athletics remains vastly behind in endowments from fundraisers or donors. Pace athletics did not receive any donations or endowments throughout the 2012 fiscal Year. Alternatively, the following fiscal year revealed a jump in endowments to just shy of \$60,000. Such a boost in annual giving might be the effect of various changes, including the internal efforts on behalf of Pace Athletics, giving patterns from alumni or donors, all of

which might have been caused by a change in relationship building efforts between Pace Athletics and their supporters.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Findings

Based on the findings from student surveys, a few expected findings were uncovered. As expected, many students did not attend athletic competitions. Of those students who did attend games, football was the dominant sport that students attended. With a lack of existing student or fan support, it was expected that many students did not attend competitions off campus. Overall, it was slightly surprising to discover that students felt so strongly about having successful teams with winning records, considering programs like Football and Men's Basketball at Pace do not have successful histories within the university. All student survey responses were important for this study as they confirmed the notion that successful sports programs matter to students attending universities.

After collecting the findings from faculty and staff, a few unexpected findings were uncovered. Despite the flexible hours of operation, facilities, and equipment offered at the Goldstein Health and Fitness Center, only half of all staff surveyed use the amenities offered. In addition, it was slightly unexpected to see that only 20% of staff have attended varsity competitions within the past academic year. This shows that at least 80% of those surveyed have not attended athletic competitions, lessening the amount of internal support athletic programs and contests receive from Pace faculty and staff. Most significantly, suggestions were taken heavily into account. For example, discounted or free gym memberships for staff and their family were dually noted. More New York City campus inclusion during prime events was very insightful, as it was assumed that New York City students and staff were pleased with their current commuter and city experience. Most importantly, staff felt that the athletic facility improvements through the master plan project in Pleasantville will be extremely important to athletics and the university as a whole. They feel that the consolidation of campus and

enhancements made to existing athletics facilities will increase school morale, attract better student-athlete talent and assist with recruitment efforts by drawing students to Pace. Staff feedback from each survey is considered extremely insightful.

In regard to results from Athletics Staff surveys, many underlying assumptions were confirmed with the returned surveys, in regard to their opinions regarding profitability, production and relationship-building within athletic departments. As expected, over half of the staff within the athletic department felt that little emphasis was currently placed on relationship-building between athletics and the university. As also expected, a majority of individuals felt that Pace Athletics receives low support from students, the community and the university as a whole. Based on the results, it was determined that the research answered the questions initially posed during the questionnaire. Alternatively, it was unexpected to experience such pushback when surveying the local community. It was concluded that many local small businesses within the town of Pleasantville do not have positive feelings toward the Athletic Department at Pace University. It is determined that if the survey recipients had felt otherwise, then they might have been more receptive to filling out the short questionnaire that was being distributed.

Finally, after analysis of documentation collected, it seems that Pace Athletics is making strategic efforts to continue growing. Currently, swimming memberships and other programs are the main source of revenue for the Athletic Department at Pace. Although Setters Club fundraising is a great initiative, asking student-athletes and coaches to raise funds for their teams might be a difficult task to accomplish. In addition to schoolwork, practices, and other athletic commitments, asking student-athletes to fundraise for travel expenses, equipment, and other team necessities might prove to be unsuccessful. By improving their outdoor facilities as part of the Master Plan construction in Pleasantville, Pace Athletics is basically making a commitment

to future students to provide them with the best facilities available within their conference.

Lastly, Pace Athletics is only recently placing an emphasis on building relationships between athletics alumni and Pace University as a whole. By creating innovative programs and events, they are sending a message to former student athletes that their involvement as alumni is critical to the future success of Pace Athletics and the University as a whole.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

College athletics plays a necessary role for a well-rounded experience for students in higher education. Based on various reviews and data collected from simple surveys, there are a few recommendations that can aid in increasing the current performance status and profitability within the Pace Athletic Department. Despite common viewpoints, Pace Athletics not only affects athletic administrators and student athletes playing varsity sports, but it also plays a crucial role within Pace University. The Goldstein Health and Fitness Center serves as a facility that is open to Pace University Faculty, Staff and students. The facility is also used by the local community, offers discounted gym memberships, hosts swim lessons, various day and sports-themed summer camps. Students who are not varsity athletes also benefit from the programs and services offered through the athletic department. The facility and its programs utilize the help of student workers, who are able to work part-time positions during games, events and tasks like front desk coverage. Marketing, Public Relations and Communications internships are offered and supervised by the external team within the athletic department, which offers students valuable experiences and skills that prepare them for the working world. As previously stated, athletic competition increases the potential to boost school morale and build lifetime friendships through competition and teamwork. Moreover, the revenue generated by visitors who attend sporting events and athletic fundraisers can further support local businesses and athletic competitions.

This project is extremely valuable to further understanding problems Pace Athletics and similar athletic departments might have with raising funds and increasing performance levels internally. Although it operates as a separate entity within the Pace University, the athletic department's accomplishments or stagnation can greatly affect the success of other departments

within the university. Research has shown that successful athletic departments generate a great deal of revenue, which in turn can finance bigger athletic facilities, attract better athletic talent, and most importantly financially give back to other departments within higher education. When utilized correctly, Pace Athletics can create strong affiliations between the alumni and university, which over time can lead to donations and endowments from alumni. As seen through research, this project is also valuable in understanding and strengthening relationships within the local community. Due to the resistance experienced while collecting survey responses, it is evident that the athletic department must work on bettering the relationship between Pace Athletics and external community.

Based on what has been acquired from various scholarly works and personal surveys, there are a few practical suggestions that are recommended to help Pace Athletics and similar mid-sized Division II institutions to grow internally and thrive financially. The athletic department can increase their revenue through their existing workforce by training and/or preparing their staff to work more efficiently to ensure they have adequate funding each year. Where in years past collegiate coaches might just need to prepare student athletes for competition, it is advised that coaching staff and other individuals within athletic departments receive adequate training on fundraising and techniques. Despite current fundraising initiatives like the Setters Club, increased travel costs combined with declining government backing has created enormous budget problem for athletic departments of all levels, including Pace Athletics. Instead of assigning student-athletes the bulk of team fundraising responsibilities, coaches should be required to generate a certain amount of funds through camps, fundraisers, outreach, and other ventures to ensure their teams and the department receive enough money for equipment, travel and other athletic expenses. From the survey responses collected, it is significant to note that

athletic faculty and staff were not aware if their current position influenced donations from alumni or revenue generation for Pace University overall.

With regard to strategies to build and maintain support from their alumni population, Pace Athletics is currently taking steps in the right direction. In January of 2014, the department hired an Athletics Development Associate, a position that works with Alumni Relations to build relationships with former Pace University student-athletes. Before the last decade, little emphasis was placed on cultivating relationships specifically with the athletic population. Since its creation, successful alumni-centered events like the Pace Athletics Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony has received positive feedback from alumni who were also student-athletes. The job of this Development Associate is to work with Athletics and Alumni Relations to increase alumni positive experiences and make former athletes feel connected with Pace. Eventually, it is expected that a larger group of alumni will attend alumni events, sporting competitions or donate to the school. Additionally, it is advised that the athletics department make stronger efforts to build their relationship with the outside community. Despite the outreach conducted through simple surveys in the surrounding town of Pleasantville, New York, many local businesses did not want to fill out the survey. After unsuccessful returns to collect surveys, it seems that of those surveyed, many did not have positive associations with the athletic department. Outreach should be conducted to invite local business leaders to athletic competitions and provide the same businesses with tours to give them insight into the new construction developments that will take place during the master plan construction.

Finally, Pace Athletics must find a way to increase the support they receive from the university. Student participation, faculty and staff attendance at sporting events and contests, are crucial to boost morale and university-wide involvement. With various campus locations, one

suggestion is to offer incentives or prizes for students from the Pleasantville campus and other campuses to attend games. Students residing at the Briarcliff, White Plains and New York City campuses have mentioned wanting to attend various games and sporting events. Pace Athletics could offer special prizes like campus t-shirts or Pace Bookstore gift cards for certain campus involvement at games that might have low attendance rates. For example, given a weekend where the football game is forecast to have low attendance, a Pace shuttle bus could take students from the NYC campus to the Pleasantville campus. Free giveaways like t-shirts or snacks could be distributed to students for their attendance. Similar incentives could be given to faculty and staff. With Pace faculty and staff addressing the need for more affordable or free gym membership, it is proposed that attendance at games might decrease gym membership for the subsequent month. For example, the more Pace Athletic contests and sporting events a professor or administrator attends, the less they would have to pay for a gym membership the following month. With these suggestions and proposed changes, it is believed that the Athletic Department at Pace University has a very promising future.

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