From the Desk of Tom Kleinlein

Dear Eagle Fan,

Graduation is in the rearview mirror, and we are already moving full speed ahead to the 2018-19 academic and athletic year. I wanted to use this opportunity to provide some behind-the-scenes insight into the transformation of our Athletic Department since being appointed as Director of Athletics. The transformation is essential to the future success of Georgia Southern Athletics. This five-year process has been defined by internal growth and many changes, and now we must now set our sights on expecting even better results and sustained success.

Academics. Over the last three years, Student-Athlete Services (SAS) has grown in size and services provided. In the fall of 2015, there were only five staff members with 25 tutors and averaging 280 tutoring appointments each week. Now, we have 10 full-time staff members and 75 tutors averaging 550-650 tutoring appointments each week! This department has risen to the challenge of improving academics and produced three consecutive years of a departmental GPA of 3.0 or higher, and posted excellent numbers in the current APR report.

Compliance. Our compliance office has added one more full-time employee to total four full-time staff members. This addition was necessary as we made our move to FBS. NCAA rules and guidelines are critical, and we take them very seriously.

Athletics’ Support Staffing. We increased the number of our support staff members within the past five years. We have added directors of operations in men’s basketball, baseball and golf as well as four new full-time athletic trainers and game day operations/facility managers. We hired additional full-time members to strength and conditioning staff. We implemented sports nutrition and sports psychology programs which are essential to the overall needs of the student-athlete.

On the external side, we added a videographer, graphic designer and a media relations director taking the athletic communications staff to six full-time employees. These positions are just a few of the behind-the-scenes employees who you do not see often but are critical to the overall success of a Division I, FBS Athletic Department.

We are very excited and encouraged about the road ahead and expect great success in 2018-19. Like you, the expectations from our student-athletes, coaches and athletic department are high. We always expect to win. We are all in this together, and we will be rewarded by our growth as we continue to soar to the next level.

As we know, our resources drastically impact our path forward with attracting the best student-athletes and coaches possible. Over these past five years, in particular, you have undoubtedly played a vital role in making sure we have the infrastructure and facilities in place to be successful. Now, we are asking you to reach more. Reach out to those fans, friends, family and alumni connections who are not currently actively involved. We have well over 100,000 alumni of this great University, but unfortunately, our membership in the Eagle Fund is not as high as it needs to be. For the 2017-18 year, the Eagle Fund had 1,867...
members. Can you imagine the impact it would have if each Eagle Fund member recruited just one more member each at **$10 per month**? That would be an additional $224,040! The Eagle Fund directly supports academic scholarships for our student-athletes. Our future growth together depends only on one thing - YOU!

Growth and success in athletics cannot happen without change and growth in the infrastructure. Facilities and staffing must continuously be enhanced and improved to translate to success in competition. We ask each and every fan and donor to invest through buying season tickets, donations, recruiting new fans/donors and giving to the coaches’ continuity fund. We must all commit to the success of Georgia Southern Athletics. Eagle Nation will be rewarded by the growth of the athletic department and the impact we have on the lives of our student-athletes. Every successful athletic program goes through challenging times, especially during a transition. The programs with sustained success have unwavering donors and fans who are committed to support them through the ups and downs associated with college athletics.

Soon, we will introduce a five-year strategic plan that will focus on four key areas that will guide us to the level of success Eagle Nation will enjoy and be proud in all areas of our department. Here’s to wishing everyone an enjoyable summer. See you in August as we kick off another year of Eagle Athletics!

Go Eagles!

Tom Kleinlein
Director of Athletics, Georgia Southern University

**LAST CHANCE – Friday, June 1 is the FINAL DAY** to purchase football season tickets/parking in a 2018 commemorative booklet! Any season tickets purchased or relocated after June 1 will be printed on generic ticket stock.

Order your commemorative booklet today!

**BUY FOOTBALL TICKETS!**

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