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Athletic Budget Increases

Submitted by Marc Cyr

2/24/2016

Question:

On November 16, 2015, The Chronicle of Higher Education (online) had an article titled "The \$10 Billion Sports Tab." They had a link to data that showed the 2013 Georgia Southern athletic subsidy was @ \$8.3 million, while in 2014 it was @ \$13.5 million. In 2014, students paid @ \$4.0 million more in athletics fees than they had previously, and also in 2014 there was @ \$4.0 million in "institutional subsidies." Further, revenue in 2013 was @ \$4.9 million, while in 2014 it increased to @ \$5.4 million. Questions: Are these figures accurate? If not, what are the correct figures? What are the corresponding figures for 2015? To what extent is the increase in budget between 2013 and 2014 due to moving our football program to Bowl Division? What are "institutional subsidies" and where do these funds come from, i.e. from what "pot(s) of money"? Between 2013 and 2014, costs/budget increased by over \$5.0 million, while revenue/income increased only \$0.5 million. How is this ten-fold gap between outgoing and incoming justified? Are losses projected to continue or to cease? What are the dollar-amount budget projections in this area? Are more student athletes in our football program being supported now than before the move to Bowl Division and the increase in budget? If so, how many? What is the cost per football program student athlete then and now?

Rationale:

All of higher education, including Georgia Southern, has suffered under reduced funding support in recent years and is under pressure to reduce costs, and there is mounting public and political upset at the increasing cost that students must pay to attend university, whether that cost is called tuition or a fee or whatever. This has been going on for years, and in the midst of it we have hugely increased our expenditures on athletics, passing much, maybe most of that financial burden on to our students. Overall, the questions in this RFI are asking for something like a cost-benefit analysis of our current athletic budget.

Response:

Minutes: 3/23/2016: Then there was the one from Marc Cyr on [Athletic Budget Increases](#). Yes, the Athletics budget did go up from 2013, \$8.3 million to 2014, \$13.5 million, and the numbers were correct. Most of that, in fact, essentially all of that is due to the move to the FBS, but it's not just football moving to FBS; it's also new sports that were added, like women's shooting and women's golf and so on. A lot of the increase was due to increased numbers of scholarships, increased salaries, and so forth. Humphrey noted that the students taxed themselves in terms of the increase for student fees both through the money for expanding the stadium, and for moving to the FBS, and that does come under the category of institutional subsidy. She noted that things like the new Astorturf being installed at the stadium is being paid for by Auxiliary Services basically.

Jim Harris (CEIT) asked what year the FBS fees were voted on.

Moderator Humphrey thought it was 2013, and that they took effect for the 13-14 school year.

Harris felt that these fees should be voted on every year by the students so that those actually paying them got to decide to do so, rather than having the expense imposed on them by former students who were no longer liable to the charges.

Moderator Humphrey said she couldn't speak to that. That would probably be a matter for SGA to think about. Errol Spence (SGA Representative) said he could take that back to the Student Government Association for comment.

3/18/2016:

The figures in the article (and the attached) were from reports we submit to the NCAA. I'll note here that the move to FBS not only entailed more football scholarships, but the start of women's golf and rifle as well (and scholarships there) because of NCAA mandates on gender "equity.". The "Other Revenue" amounts include money from the Boosters used for such purposes as purchasing a van for men's golf (not allowed from general funds), renovating the Parrish building (many coaches were moved out of Hanner to the renovated space; vacated space in Hanner reverted back to Health & Kinesiology). One other note: the new astroturf for the stadium is being paid from Auxiliary (bookstore, housing, dining, etc) profits. This is the same source of funds that has been used in past years for renovation of buildings such as Cone, Veasey, Stanford, etc. --Pat

