

On the Cancellation of Men's Track and Field at Clemson: Part II

Bryan Denham

As discussed in my previous contribution to *Open Forum*, Clemson plans to discontinue its men's track and field (XCTF) program in June 2021. A comparably large number of minority athletes participate in this program, which includes men's cross country as well as men's indoor and outdoor track and field. The previous article suggested that neither Title IX nor financial positioning in the athletic department seemed to support eliminating men's XCTF, and it also cited continued low enrollment among minorities at the university. This article considers additional indicators of where the athletic department stands relative to others in the ACC. It also considers funds contributed from non-athletic-department sources.

Allocated Monies

The table below shows athletic-department finances for ACC public universities in 2018-2019.¹ Clemson had the third-largest budget among ACC public-school athletic departments, and the 22nd largest in the nation. Overall, the athletic department appears to have performed responsibly, taking in more money than it spent. Of note here is the university allocation of \$5.6 million to the department in 2018-2019; that figure constituted 4.19% of all athletic-department revenue.² Compared to some schools, the percentage appears modest; however, \$5.6 million is more than three times the amount of money it costs to run the men's XCTF program in a given year. And according to the document where the figures originated, the funds came from student fees and other non-athletic-department sources. It therefore seems reasonable to ask, is there room for negotiation with these annual monies? That is, can the university stipulate that non-athletic-department funds should be used toward protecting men's XCTF, given its strong history and record of increasing minorities at Clemson? If such a step is possible, the university should consider taking it.

ACC Schools	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Total Allocated	Percent Allocated
12. Florida State	152,757,883	150,147,316	15,607,019	10.22
19. Louisville	139,955,824	151,167,940	5,923,817	4.23
22. Clemson	133,861,515	131,978,513	5,602,440	4.19
32. Virginia	110,219,117	112,621,238	18,429,801	16.72
36. North Carolina	107,812,619	110,809,706	9,163,374	8.5
42. Virginia Tech	96,772,489	93,961,068	10,278,338	10.62
47. NC State	92,724,548	90,100,025	6,851,989	7.39
50. Georgia Tech	85,802,112	96,334,831	8,257,182	9.62

¹ <https://sports.usatoday.com/ncaa/finances>

² "Total Allocated: The sum of student fees, direct and indirect institutional support and state money allocated to the athletics department, minus certain funds the department transferred back to the school. The transfer amount cannot exceed the sum of student fees and direct institutional support that the department receives from the school. (Under NCAA reporting rules, any additional money transferred to the school cannot be considered part of the department's annual operating revenues or expenses.) The NCAA and others consider student fees, direct and indirect institutional support and state money "allocated," or everything not generated by the department's athletics functions." See <https://sports.usatoday.com/2020/07/05/methodology-for-2019-ncaa-athletic-department-revenue-database/>

Beyond Clemson, administrators should also consider the responsibilities of universities in major athletic conferences. Clemson has spent an excessive amount of money on its football program – far more than most ACC schools could ever, or would ever, consider spending on one sport – and now it is disrupting the ACC by withdrawing a mainstay track-and-field competitor. As the numbers below indicate, Clemson will soon have the fewest teams competing in the ACC.

The ACC

The table below shows the number of varsity sports at each school in the ACC as well as undergraduate enrollments at each.³ At present, Clemson seems pretty close to where it should be, with 19 varsity sports. Given its enrollment, it actually could stand to add – not eliminate – another sport or two. For example, North Carolina and Clemson have comparable enrollments, but at present, UNC varsity sports outnumber Clemson’s 28 to 19. After June 2021, those numbers will move to 28-16. At that point, Clemson will have the fewest varsity sports in the ACC, with the fourth-highest undergraduate enrollment. With 2,000 fewer students, Virginia will outnumber Clemson 27 to 16, and Louisville, with 4,335 fewer students, will outnumber CU 21 to 16. Enrollment-related arguments for cutting the men’s XCTF program do not exist.

ACC Schools	Varsity Sports	Sports Rank	Enrollment Rank	Undergrad Enrollment ⁴
Boston College	31	1	12	9,370
North Carolina	28	2	5	19,355
Virginia	27	3	7	17,011
Duke	27	3	14	6,649
Notre Dame	26	5	13	8,731
NC State	23	6	3	25,973
Virginia Tech	22	7	2	29,300
Louisville	21	8	9	15,860
Present Clemson	19	9	4	20,195
Pittsburgh	19	9	6	19,200
Florida State	18	11	1	33,270
Syracuse	18	11	10	15,275
Georgia Tech	17	13	8	15,964
Miami	17	13	11	11,307
Wake Forest	16	15	15	5,287
Future Clemson	16	14 (tie)	4	20,195

University Representations

The images below appeared in the *Greenville News* (online) between February 12, 2021 and February 22, 2021. As indicated in the bylines, they are essentially press releases prepared by the university and sent to the newspaper for publication. Nothing is hidden in that respect, but presenting the university as a beacon of diversity appears disingenuous, at best. If it was really interested in helping African Americans, it would not be canceling men’s XCTF.

³ Undergraduate enrollments are used in calculating Title IX proportionality.

⁴ From <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges>

Story from  #CLEMSONANDCOUNTY

Clemson puts college on the radar for students in the I-95 Corridor

Clemson has built a pipeline to higher education for underrepresented students.

Cemile Kavountzis, for Clemson University

Published 6:02 a.m. ET Feb. 12, 2021



Shontavia Johnson (AVP in the Provost's Office) talks to a group of Clemson Career Workshop students during their summer program. *Clemson University*

Story from  #CLEMSONANDCOUNTY

Clemson to host fifth consecutive Men of Color National Summit

Clemson's annual event encourages men of color to pursue higher education.

Jessica Levy, for Clemson University

Published 6:01 a.m. ET Feb. 19, 2021



The Clemson University Men of Color Summit brings underrepresented high school men together with leaders in business, academics, athletics and entertainment to encourage a path to success. The fifth annual summit takes place November 4-5 in Greenville. *Provided By Clemson University*

Story from  #CLEMSONANDCOUNTY

Why diversity in classrooms matters to Clemson — from K-12 to college

Clemson's more than 30 diversity programs and initiatives have benefits beyond the campus.

Clemson University

Published 6:01 a.m. ET Feb. 15, 2021



Clemson University features more than 30 diversity programs and initiatives throughout campus including Call Me MISTER, a mentoring program to bring more young, diverse teachers to low-performing elementary schools in South Carolina. *Clemson University*

Story from  #CLEMSONANDCOUNTY

Clemson University's annual Men of Color Summit announces 5 major themes

From career development to personal identity, this Clemson event addresses critical current issues.

Jessica Levy, for Clemson University

Published 6:01 a.m. ET Feb. 22, 2021



Clemson University's Men of Color Summit brings leaders of business, academics, athletics and entertainment together for a multi-day event designed to encourage young high school-aged men of color to succeed in college and beyond. This year marks the fifth annual event taking place November 4-5 in Greenville. *Provided By Clemson University*

Conclusion

From the numbers examined here and in the previous contribution to *Open Forum*, empirical indicators do not support discontinuing the men's XCTF program at Clemson. Title IX numbers look good, and IPTAY recently enjoyed its best-ever fundraising year, at \$73 million. Athletic department finances appear to be in good shape, with \$5.6 million having come from non-athletic-department sources in 2018-2019. Dropping down to 16 varsity sports appears unnecessary, especially when eliminating a program with a comparably large number of minority athletes. As for the proverbial elephant in the room, the university is not an NFL franchise, and administrators need to stop treating it like one.

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