The UMBC Athletics Department

Request for Elimination of Men’s and Women’s Tennis

Date of Issue: October 26, 2015

After a review of all sports currently offered by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), the Athletics Department is proposing the elimination of men's and women's tennis as NCAA Division I varsity sports. In making a decision to eliminate the men's and women's Tennis programs, the UMBC Department of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation examined the following criteria established by the Policy on Adding or Terminating a Varsity Sport:

1. Consistency with UMBC’s image and mission;
2. The availability of facilities that meet NCAA and conference standards;
3. The record of recent competitive success or anticipated competitive performance once a team is established;
4. The record of support and interest from students, alumni, and the community or the anticipation of sufficient support and interest once a team is established;
5. The impact on diversity and gender representation consistent with NCAA regulations reflecting the goal that athlete demographics reflect UMBC’s student body profile;
6. Access to a suitable conference and national championship tournaments as appropriate or, if proposing to eliminate a sport, maintaining membership in a conference;
7. A financial analysis projecting the impact of the proposed action, especially its impact on the Student Athletics Fee, the budgets of the Athletics Department and the university, and staffing requirements.

With regard to these criteria, while some criteria may have had more or less weight than others in influencing the decision to drop men’s and women’s Tennis, no one criterion alone determined this decision.

The following written proposal explains in detail each criterion and why the UMBC Department of Athletics is proposing that men's and women’s Tennis be dropped as NCAA Division I varsity sports.
Consistency with UMBC’s image and mission

The current UMBC mission reads: “UMBC is a dynamic public research university integrating teaching, research and service to benefit the citizens of Maryland. As an Honors University, the campus offers academically talented students a strong undergraduate liberal arts foundation that prepares them for graduate and professional study, entry into the workforce, and community service and leadership. UMBC emphasizes science, engineering, information technology, human services and public policy at the graduate level. UMBC contributes to the economic development of the State and the region through entrepreneurial initiatives, workforce training, K-16 partnerships, and technology commercialization in collaboration with public agencies and the corporate community. UMBC is dedicated to cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility and lifelong learning.”

Consistent with the mission statement. The men’s and women’s tennis programs are currently comprised of individuals from multiple countries and are ethnically diverse. The programs also support the University’s mission to support students as they complete their undergraduate degrees.

Availability of facilities that meet NCAA/Conference standards

Currently, there is very limited access to facilities that meet NCAA/Conference standards. Both men’s and women’s tennis programs practice outdoors, when weather permits, at the six courts found on UMBC’s campus. These courts, however, are in poor condition due to weather exposure, high utilization, and lack of funding necessary for upkeep of proper surfacing. There are a few metal bleachers outside of the courts that are available to fans and no locker rooms or restroom facilities available for the student-athletes, coaches, or fans. The optimum number of courts to compete as a Division I program would be eight courts, including both indoor and outdoor courts.
Due to the cold climate of the region during much of the tennis season, many of the men’s and women’s tennis practices must be held at an indoor facility 4.5 miles from campus. Both tennis programs must rent court time and pay to transport the student-athletes to off-campus practices. This places time pressure on student-athletes as well as budget pressure on the programs. These costs continue to increase year by year.

The six courts on campus are highly utilized, not only by the men’s and women’s varsity programs, but also by the institution’s recreation department, men’s and women’s club tennis teams, UMBC faculty and staff, and the general Catonsville community. This overuse affects the quality of courts that the student-athletes may compete on. In addition, eliminating the DI programs would increase availability of the courts, allowing for more recreational use and alleviating some of the stress on the courts.

Record of competitive success

Both men’s and women’s tennis programs have had at best average success at the conference level. While the men’s program has had fair success, the women’s program has had uneven success from a competitive standpoint. The teams’ five-year records include the following:

**Men’s Tennis**
2014-15: 12-6, Lost in Missouri Valley Conference Semifinals
2013-14: 12-10, Lost in America East Championship
2012-13: 9-9
2011-12: 10-10
2010-11: 13-7

**Women’s Tennis**
2014-15: 5-14, lost in America East Semifinals
2013-14: 8-13, lost in America East Championships
2012-13: 4-16
2011-12: 15-8
2010-11: 10-9, lost in America East Semifinals
Support and interest from students, alumni, and the community

In regards to support and interest from UMBC students, alumni, and the community, there is virtually no support from a financial or participatory perspective. There are limited numbers of UMBC students, alumni, and community members at any men’s or women’s tennis matches. Also, both men’s and women’s tennis programs have very small foundation accounts, approximately $5,200 in each program. Other non-emphasis sports usually carry a larger foundation amount. While the department will assist teams with annual fundraising events, coaches are encouraged to create additional opportunities to connect with alumni and fundraise for their teams. Also, having a predominantly international program can make it challenging for alumni to stay connected, especially if they are no longer living in the area and return to their home country.

Impact on diversity and gender representation

Elimination of the men’s and women’s tennis programs will not affect UMBC’s robust diversity profile. From a gender equity perspective, this change will be consistent with UMBC’s Title IX compliance efforts.

Current Team Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Squad Size</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Yr. in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MTE</td>
<td>8 (2 walk-ons)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-Sr., 3-Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTE</td>
<td>10 (2 walk-ons)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3-Sr., 3-Jr., 3-So., 1 Fr</td>
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</table>
Access to suitable conference and national championship tournaments

This criterion is very problematic for the department, especially as it relates to the men’s tennis program. Currently, UMBC is a member of the America East Conference. However, after the 2013-14 season the America East Conference dropped men’s tennis as a sponsored sport, forcing UMBC men’s tennis to find an alternative conference. Conference participation is essential because a team must be a member of an NCAA Division I conference in order to have access to NCAA Championships. UMBC was able to sign a two-year agreement in 2013-14 for men’s tennis to participate in the Missouri Valley Conference (MVC). The MVC consists of the following schools: Drake, Illinois State, Southern Illinois, Wichita State, Hartford, Stony Brook, and UMBC. From a travel standpoint, this is a time-consuming and costly option. However, this is currently the only option for UMBC men’s tennis. The institution has also formally reached out to the NEC, MAAC, and MAC conferences to ask for a men’s tennis membership, with no success. Also, because of the budget and Title IX issues being experienced across Division I athletics at this time, other institutions have either recently dropped men’s tennis and/or women’s tennis or are in the process of eliminating both men’s and/or women’s tennis as varsity sports. Therefore, the future of the MVC for men’s tennis and access to NCAA Championships is unknown at this time.

The America East Conference has also recently fallen below the NCAA minimum conference requirement of six teams for women’s tennis. Conferences must carry six programs to ensure an Automatic Qualifier for the winner of the conference championship to participate in the NCAA women’s tennis championships. NJIT, participating as a women’s tennis affiliate member in the America East Conference, has left to formally begin competing in the Atlantic Sun Conference. Therefore, we anticipate that the America East Conference will begin discussions in the direction of ending women’s tennis as a sponsored sport within the conference. If UMBC were to retain tennis and the America East decided to drop it as a sponsored sport, UMBC would be forced to reopen negotiation with other conferences, revisiting conferences that had already declined our initial request or seeking out other more distant conferences that would place further travel strain on student-athletes and budgets.
Financial impact and analysis of the proposed action

Fiscal analysis shows that elimination of both men’s and women’s tennis would provide much-needed stabilizing resources to the UMBC Athletics Department budget for retirement of debt and new investments over a period of years in both intercollegiate athletics and recreation programming. After scholarships to current student-athletes are honored, the Department would net $653,376 for reallocation. The reallocation will also serve to help minimize future student athletic fees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Expenses</th>
<th>Program Revenues</th>
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<td>Facilities</td>
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<td>Health Insurance</td>
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<td>Salaries</td>
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<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,403</strong></td>
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**Projected Cost Savings** $653,376

Conclusion

In conclusion, the UMBC Athletics Department believes that it is in the best interest of the department that we eliminate men’s and women’s tennis as Division I varsity sports. There is little access to acceptable facilities, the programs have fair and uneven competitive success, there is virtually no interest from the UMBC community in both varsity sports, eliminating both sports could assist with Title IX equity issues, there potentially may not be access to conference and/or NCAA championships in the future for at least one of the programs, and, lastly, the elimination of both men’s and women’s tennis would make a substantial contribution toward stabilizing the Athletics Department budget as it carries out its dual mission in intercollegiate sports and recreation.
If the UMBC Athletic Policy Committee and institutional executive leadership endorse this recommendation, UMBC Athletics will treat all of those affected with respect, honor, dignity, and civility. UMBC will honor all athletic grant in aids until each current UMBC student-athlete graduates with their undergraduate degree from the institution. UMBC will also grant unconditional releases to all student-athletes affected in the event that the student-athletes would like to transfer to another institution.