Statement

The UConn Avery Point athletic department has made great strides over the course of the past three years, even with a sizable portion of that span occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. The department and its student-athletes have achieved record-setting academic success with all three programs and its participants earning extensive campus, regional and national laurels.

In addition, athletic success has also returned to heights unforeseen in quite some time. Specifically, during the 2019-20 academic year, cut short due to COVID-19, all three teams combined to record a winning percentage of .587.

However, the reality is that the world of collegiate athletics is constantly changing and evolving, and our department is committed to keeping UConn Avery Point athletics at the forefront.

This document encompasses a strategic plan that begins with the 2020-21 academic year through the 2025-26 academic year. It will cover numerous areas related to the overall operation of the UConn Avery Point athletic department.

- Community Engagement
- Athletic Communications (social media, website, publications, etc.)
- Fundraising and Events
- Branding/Style Guide/Logo/Look
- Equipment and apparel
- Waterfront Programming
- Student-Athlete Experience
- Recreational/Intramural Sports
- Esports
- Staffing/Human Resources functions
- Academic structure and support for student athletes
- Life Skills
- Social Justice
- Student-Athlete Advisory Council
- Title IX
- Facilities upgrades/improvements
- Transportation
Community Engagement

Community engagement is an important component of the experience as a UConn Avery Point student-athlete. The student-athletes, coaches and staff have been active and engaged over the past several years, yet the intention for future years is to build or expand the programming efforts.

Objective: Work with student-athletes, coaches and staff to increase community engagement efforts, both on- and off-campus. Establish a goal of 500 community service hours performed by UConn Avery Point athletic department representatives during the 2021-22 academic year.

Present/pre-COVID efforts include(d):

- Sports skill clinics (men’s basketball)
- Participation in Read Across America (in person)
- American Heart Association Heart Walk (in person)
- Contributions to “Read to Grow” program
- Volunteer efforts with Groton Human Services programming
- Partnership for goods contributions at home games with Always Home

Future new opportunities include:

- Implementation of Girls and Women in Sports Day event (in person or virtual): Feb., 2022
- Campus-wide initiative (event held in gymnasium) for “Be The Match” event to support the National Marrow Donor Program
- Waterfront Programming for community members (kayaking/sailing/paddling)
- Sports skill clinics (all 3 sports, virtual or in person)
- Participation in Read Across America (virtual and/or in person)
- Potential partnerships/site visits with Groton and/or New London public schools
- Virtual programming (reading books) for local childcare facilities and/or school systems
- Food drives in conjunction with holidays/home athletic events
- Holiday toy drive with home athletic events

External Affairs: Athletic Communications

Objective: Redesign and launch of new athletics website through third-party vendor.

Background: The current athletic website is a subpage of the larger University website. Simply put, the front end (what the viewer sees) is not user-friendly, can be challenging to navigate and lacks many necessary features that would benefit our constituents. For the back end of the site, (controlling content and pictures) Wordpress is the platform utilized.

A new athletics website provides many features that are necessary in the present day for both internal and external communication. The current pricing and contractual structure is within our budget, and in fact, had been budgeted as a potential line item in each of the previous two fiscal years. The ability to have greater internal control and versatility as a department with the use of a
third-party content management system will help streamline our ability to produce information, while also benefitting the larger external community including student-athletes, fans, alumni, parents and more.

**Necessary Action Steps:**

- Begin RFP process in March, 2021
- Review RFP’s in March/April, 2021
- Work with successful vendor towards a summer, 2021 launch

**Objective:** Development of a UConn Avery Point athletics “app” for mobile platforms

**Background/Action Steps:** This process will correlate with the arrival of a third-party athletics website, as many of the primary companies in the athletics website realm offer this as a part of their standard offerings.

**Objective:** Evaluate offerings for enhanced video content, including but not limited to: livestreaming of home athletic events, highlights, coaches’ shows and additional content (video tours, testimonials, etc.)

**Background:** Currently, the athletic department offers the following video opportunities:

- Basketball games are recorded on SD card and brought to SEC TV, who then uploads the games to its YouTube channel and airs via television.
- Game highlights for all teams are captured by the Athletic Director and posted on UConn Avery Point athletic department social media platforms.

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Evaluate the feasibility of internal and external streaming opportunities, including but not limited to: Facebook Live, YouTube, BoxCast, Wirecast and SEC TV.
- Develop additional content from the Athletic Director, potentially inclusive of a “Monday Minute” check in to start the week.
- Gauge interest of coaches for more formalized “coaches’ shows” to be posted.
- If staffing permits, reestablish department YouTube page and utilize the social media platform for highlight packages.
- Assess potential for streaming opportunities and ability to integrate advertising/corporate sponsorship into the production.

**Objective:** Increase social media metrics and following.

**Background:** The athletic department had no active Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Twitter accounts prior to October, 2018. While the YouTube page has not been utilized, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have all been used extensively for a variety of publicity and informational purposes.
Social Media Goals for conclusion of 2021-22 academic year:

Facebook – 400 followers  Instagram – 450 followers  Twitter – 400 followers

Objective: Develop, in conjunction with Admissions Office and potentially in leveraging corporate sponsorship opportunities, a UConn Avery Point Athletics’ Visitor’s Guide.

Potential Action Steps:

- Initiate dialogue between Athletic Director, Admissions Office and other related stakeholders (ex. University Communications) to develop a UConn Avery Point Athletics’ Visitor’s Guide.

External Affairs: Fundraising and Events

General Revenue

Objective: To increase revenue and donations by roughly 50% (from $200,000 annually to $300,000 annually) by the conclusion of this strategic plan. Doing so will provide additional funds to assist with staffing, equipment, facility improvement, and additional measures to enhance program needs and/or the student-athlete experience.

Background: As currently constructed, rental revenue generated from the Athletic Center generated between $180,000 and $200,000 annually prior to the pandemic. This figure constitutes roughly half of the overall athletics operating budget, with the other portion coming directly from the campus.

Potential Action Steps:

- Update Corporate Sponsorship document established in winter, 2020.
- Begin process of identifying potential local sponsors.
- Research potential calendar revenue streams (FCE Consultants, College Publications).
- Communicate and/or soft advertising for Athletic Center hours/rental opportunities.
- Continue to evaluate existing rental rate structure and feasibility for increases.
- Leverage revenue generating opportunities available through:
  - Athletic Website
  - Equipment/Apparel vendors (ex. Pop up stores)

Target Financial Goals for conclusion of 2025-26 academic year:

Rental Revenue/Sponsorship – $250,000 annually  Foundation: all accounts – $50,000 annually
**Department Wide Golf Tournament**

**Objective:** To generate revenue and reconnect with alumni, family members and friends of UConn, Avery Point and the athletic department. Last event was held in 2017.

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Contact Shennecossett Golf Course for available dates in 2021.
- Identify feasibility of hosting event in 2021 or tabling until 2022.

**Hall of Fame event**

**Objective:** To honor past individuals of distinction and reconnect with alumni, family members and friends of UConn, Avery Point and the athletic department. Last event was held in 2018.

This next event will take place post pandemic in order to have a more robust capacity without the present attendance restrictions.

**Necessary Action Steps:**

- Identify pool of potential candidates for induction.
- Use intentionality in order to select future induction classes. For example, of the 45 current members of the Hall of Fame, there are only 3 female inductees, and only one of whom was a former UCAP student athlete.
- Research available materials and seek outside assistance from alumni and former student-athletes if necessary in order to build up historical information about potential candidates.

**Additional Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

- Waterfront Programming initiatives “for revenue” such as kayaking/paddling/sailing and/or renting of UConn equipment
- “Pool In” Movies
- Pool courses, including scuba, learn to swim, water aerobics, etc.
- Leveraging the Athletic Center for non-traditional events such as spelling bees, trade shows, etc.
- Leverage and/or maximize “short term” initiatives such as UConn Gives, Day of Giving
- Special events such as Wine Tastings, Hot Stove sessions, or potentially individual sport Golf Tournaments
External Affairs: Branding

Logo, Look and Style Guide

Objective: Create, whether in conjunction with University communications and/or a third-party vendor, a new athletics “look”, logo and color scheme. Included in this process would be a brand book and/or style guide that would display all proper uses (and improper) of the logo, along with appropriate color setup (PMS, CMYK, RGB, etc.).

Background: The athletic department currently has no consistency in this area. The present athletic logo (Pointer dog) was created by University communications in 2018. The color schemes that the basketball programs use are Navy and White, however, the two programs different in font choices and size. The baseball team uses a variety of colors, fonts and looks on their equipment, uniforms and apparel, including Royal Blue, Red, White and Grey. There is also no standard “mark” for the Avery Point baseball hat logo.

This lack of consistency adds a clear obstacle in establishing a brand identity for the department. This is a process that must be undertaken in order to move the department and each of the teams forward. Doing so will also potentially open new opportunities related to apparel and merchandise sales, along with the potential for partnerships with the campus bookstore and the UConn licensing department.

Furthermore, the Pointer dog is a mark that was seemingly made specifically for basketball. Rather, a mark should be made to incorporate and be available for all programs (including recreation and waterfront programs), or, separate marks should be made for each potential sport/program offered, with the ability to broaden the portfolio at an additional cost for other campus entities (ex. ASG, Scuba Club, Knitting Club, etc.).

Potential Action Steps:

- Begin exploration process with University communications/licensing/potential vendors in spring, 2021.
- If costs are feasible, establish a timeline (whether in FY22 or FY23) to go forward with rebranding.
- If done externally, identify a vendor for rebranding.
- Map out timeline for phase out of old uniforms/apparel and phase in of new uniforms/apparel based on projected costs.
- Upon completion of the process, update the athletics website with new marks/style guide and share new information with NJCAA, University Communications, Licensing and media outlets.
**We Are Avery Point**

**Objective:** Create, whether in conjunction with University communications and/or a third-party vendor, a new initiative that would result in a stock branded t-shirt provided for all incoming freshmen and transfers on an annual basis. This item would be handed out at each Avery Point orientation on an annual basis to create school spirit and increase brand awareness.

**Background:** UConn Avery Point has a unique role on many fronts and our branding and message is inconsistent. Many internal and external communications (signage, emails, letters, etc.) promote “One UConn” and/or “Go Huskies”. However, the reality of it is that students, faculty and staff are a part of the “Pointers” community during their time at Avery Point. Establishing our “own culture and identity” right from orientation, and also potentially implementing these ideas/theme on the Avery Point website and other social media platforms, will help educate our campus community on who we are from the outset.

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Begin dialogue with Student Services unit to discuss opportunity.
- Establish committee to discuss/brainstorm themes/slogans, etc. Committee should be inclusive of student leaders (ex. ASG, other clubs and organizations), student athletes and additional faculty and staff. It would also seem logical that the Athletic Director and the Director of Student Activities also serve on the committee by nature of their roles.
- Decide on final course of action and timeline for implementation.
- Discuss internally amongst various units to decide on fiscal commitments for participating areas.

**Name the Pointer Mascot**

**Objective:** Develop an initiative to help enhance and promote the identity and brand of UConn Avery Point and its athletic department.

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Establish committee to discuss/brainstorm themes/slogans, etc. Committee should be inclusive of student leaders (ex. ASG, other clubs and organizations), student-athletes and additional faculty and staff. It would also seem logical that the Athletic Director and the Director of Student Activities also serve on the committee by nature of their roles.
- Establish a process/criteria for voting (i.e. can anyone submit a name, do you have to be part of a student organization, etc.)
- After name selection, aggressively market the Pointer name and secure opportunities for public appearances (ex. Parades, fairs, community events, etc.).
Equipment and Apparel

Objective: Explore potential opportunities to have a consistent vendor for all team uniform and apparel needs, and if possible, all equipment needs as well.

Background: UConn Avery Point athletics currently uses BSN Sports for apparel and uniforms for its basketball program, and Billings Sports for equipment purchases (for all 3 programs), along with apparel and uniforms for baseball. Again, the industry standard for college athletic departments is to have one specific vendor for apparel and uniforms at a minimum.

As noted earlier, the inconsistency in color scheme, logos and branding causes a major challenge for the department. Working to streamline the process may result in reduced costs and could also provide additional revenue opportunities (such as online stores) that the department is not currently taking advantage of.

Potential Action Steps:

• Completion of the logo rebranding and style guide.
• Research potential vendors and complete a RFP or RFQ if necessary.
• Finalize agreement with successful vendor.

Academics: Recognition, Structure and Support

Objective: Continue to consistently evaluate and execute the most effective support structure for Avery Point student-athletes, including but not limited to:

• Study Hall/weekly academic requirements
• Collaboration and/or independence of execution of programming
• Partnerships with campus entities such as Academic Advising, Academic Center, Library, UConn Connects
• Development of materials to streamline communication/assist with FAQ or common scenarios

Background: UConn Avery Point student-athletes have reached new levels of success in the classroom over the course of the past three academic years. The collective group now consistently posts a semester GPA in excess of 3.0. The department goal is to continue to achieve an average academic year student-athlete GPA of 3.0 GPA in each of the years of this strategic plan.

Objective: Initiate the creation of a National Student-Athlete Day event in April, 2021. Initial format to be virtual. Permanent format to be determined post-pandemic, potentially to encompass an in-person luncheon event with each student-athlete inviting their favorite professor.

Background: National Student-Athlete Day is recognized by most collegiate athletic departments, although UConn Avery Point has not participated in the past. Student-athletes must achieve a 3.0
cumulative GPA and participate in some form of community outreach/engagement activity in order to receive recognition.

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Initiate the creation of a National Student-Athlete Day event in April, 2021 (virtual recognition) and evaluate process for future structure of this event.

**Objective:** Identify and introduce a Faculty Athletic Representative to serve in this role.

**Background:** The Faculty Athletic Representative, as specified by the NCAA, is a member of an institution’s faculty or administrative staff who is designated by the institution’s president or chancellor or other appropriate entity to represent the institution and its faculty in the institution’s relationships with the NCAA and its conference(s), if any. A member institution shall designate an individual to serve as faculty athletic representative. The individual shall be a member of the institution’s faculty or an administrator who holds faculty rank and shall not hold an administrative or coaching position in the athletic department. The member institution shall determine duties of the FAR.

While the NJCAA does not mandate the designation of a FAR, there are some institutions that have identified an individual. Having a FAR will add an additional layer of transparency, along with regular and direct communication from a distinguished faculty member and the Athletic Director. These conversations and the shared relationship could eventually result in programming, initiatives and/or other decisions that help with the department’s efficiency as well as the student-athlete experience.

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Identify and if possible, appoint a Faculty Athletics Representative for the 2021-22 academic year.

**Life Skills**

**Objective:** Create a Life Skills program for the purpose of enhancing the complete student-athlete experience.

**Background:** At the present time, some Life Skills topics may be covered in UNIV/FYE courses. However, developing a robust and regular Life Skills program will provide breadth and depth to the overall student-athlete experience.

Potential topics include:

- Resume/cover letter writing
- Interviewing
- Economics/personal finance
- Etiquette
- Study skills
- Fitness/Health
- Career Fair preparation
- Transferrable skills
- Student loans/financial aid process
- Mental health awareness

**Potential Action Steps:**

- Initiate Life Skills programming for UConn Avery Point student-athletes for the 2021-22 academic year.
- Identify, connect and/or reconnect with former UConn Avery Point and/or UConn alums who may be willing to share their expertise and experiences as a part of the programming.

**Objective:** Establish a Life Skills Cup: “The Pointer Pride Challenge”

Intent is to encourage a holistic and well-rounded approach towards student athlete success and to create an environment in which the department makes a concerted effort to support each other and to support others as well.

**Potential Action Steps:**

Develop “The Pointer Pride Challenge” for the 2021-22 academic year.

- “Life Skills” Programming participation 30 percent
- Community Engagement and participation 30 percent
- Team GPA 20 percent
- Athletic Achievement 5 percent
- Other (Above and Beyond) 5 percent

Could include:
- NJCAA committee involvement
- UConn committee involvement
- UConn club and organization involvement (ASG, Pack Ambassador, OA, etc.)
- Other exemplary or noteworthy contributions or honors (NATYCAA Scholar-Athlete Award, All-American, etc.)

**Other notes:**

- All team members must participate in at least one Life Skills programing event and one community engagement event in order for a team to be eligible to win.
Human Resources/Onboarding/Staffing

The athletic department staff currently consists of approximately 35-40 individuals annually, inclusive of administrators, coaches, and student workers, under both paid and gratis agreements. During pre-COVID times, the Athletic Center was open for campus and external use for approximately 105 hours each week. Since the pandemic hit, when open, the Athletic Center hours of operation now total roughly 70 hours per week.

In addition, the department offers up to 10 hours per week of Waterfront Programming opportunities for members of the campus community, and, in pre-COVID times, family members and alumni as well.

At present, the athletic department consists of one full-time Athletic Director (UCPEA member), and one part-time Waterfront Programs Coordinator (UCPEA member). All remaining paid coaches and staff are hired under the Special Payroll classification. Three individuals (Associate AD, Assistant AD and Administrative Assistant) are hired as Special Payroll administrators, with all remaining coaches (head and assistant) or staff paid various stipend amounts. The department also has several volunteer coaches/staff issued agreements under Special Payroll.

Objective: To consistently evaluate and improve on the department’s operational and staffing structure. Strategies must be employed to maximize the roles of coaches/staff under existing financial model, but also should be evaluated to include potential future growth opportunities.

Potential Action Steps:

- Identify all necessary department functions and consult current job descriptions for current staff/coach roles to determine successes or adjustments needed off of current operating structure.
- Identify potential areas of emphasis/need, within the department, including but not limited to:
  - Fiscal affairs
  - Compliance
  - Facilities Operations/Game Operations
  - Athletic Training: whether internal via UConn or third party options
  - Strength and Conditioning: whether internal via UConn or third party options
  - Academic Support
  - Equipment
  - Bus Drivers
- In conjunction with Campus Director and Associate Campus Director, determine financial savings/benchmarks needed for allocation of applicable funds for:
  - Increased/max special payroll threshold
  - Part-time UCPEA classification
  - Full-time UCPEA classification

Coach, staff and Waterfront Programs needs will all be evaluated as a part of this process.
Improvements have been made regarding the human resources, onboarding, payroll and rehiring processes over the course of the past several years. Changes by the University to the Pageup platform in 2020 created additional challenges that, as of January, 2021 have been addressed and improved upon.

**Objective:** To continue to improve the onboarding and human resource processes of the department, both internally, in conjunction with other Avery Point staff and/or Storrs staff members.

**Potential Action Steps:**

The athletic department will look to improve in these areas as it relates to several topics:

- Onboarding: in addition to the standard introduction to the hiring process via Pageup (for both paid and gratis hires), all new hires will receive an “onboarding” checklist and a copy of the latest Athletic Department Employee handbook. All new paid coaches and staff will be required to obtain a UConn ID.

- Data/Certification Tracking: The athletic department will create a “living” document in TEAMS to be used and updated regarding numerous items, including but not limited to:
  - Driver’s License and expiration
  - CPR/First Aid Certification status
  - UConn specific programming (Compliance Training, Minor Protection Training, Sexual Harassment Prevention Training, etc.)
  - NJCAA Compliance Exam completion

**Social Justice**

Numerous events that took place in our country during the 2020 and 2021 calendar years have emphasized the need for the athletic department to provide an educational component and programming related to social justice. These efforts fall in line with campus-wide initiatives, such as the White Accountability Group and the UConn Avery Point Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee.

Over the course of the past three years, the athletic department has made a concerted effort to recruit, hire and retain staff that mirrors that diverse nature of the campus’ undergraduate student population. Since October, 2018, the department has hired 50 individuals in various roles, including student workers, volunteer and paid coaches, and additional support staff.

Based on available information, approximately 40% of those hires have been females, with approximately 38% of the overall total representing either BIPOC, Asian American or Latino groups.

The athletic department is committed to an environment which all races, genders, sexual orientations, religions, etc. are represented in our coach and staff composition. Simply put, when students, guests, members and of course student-athletes, walk into our facilities and interact with our coaches and staff, we want to make sure that there is a broad range of individuals present.
Objective: Provide education, outreach and programming in a fashion that brings social justice into the athletics conversation in the same manner that we discuss topics such as facilities, compliance, equipment and more.

Potential Action Steps:

- Seek input of student-athletes, coaches and staff to determine best measures for implementation during the 2021-22 academic year.
- Athletic Director to participate in, and do follow up exercises and research related to “A Long Talk”, an initiative created in 2020 with a goal of practicing and acting in an anti-racist manner.
- Explore the feasibility of implementing a department Social Justice Committee and/or subcommittee in conjunction with the Avery Point Student-Athlete Advisory Council.
- Research opportunities for advocacy opportunities, including but not limited to: apparel/messaging, etc.

Student-Athlete Advisory Council

The creation of a Student-Athlete Advisory Council at UConn Avery Point would provide additional leadership opportunities for students, and also provide the opportunity to communicate with campus and external constituents, while positively championing changes with the department.

The Athletic Director is in support of the creation of a Student-Athlete Advisory Council for the 2021-22 academic year. The group would be made up of two student-athletes from each of the three existing programs at UConn Avery Point. Student-athletes could either self-nominate or be recommended by a head coach.

The SAAC would look to provide insight on the student-athlete experience, including the rules, regulations and policies (department, UConn and NJCAA) that are at the center of that experience.

In addition, the group would be overseen by coach and/or administrator.

Potential Action Steps:

- Develop a Student-Athlete Advisory Council at UConn Avery Point for the 2021-22 academic year.

Title IX

Title IX is applied to athletics in three facets:

- Participation: Title IX requires that women and men be provided equitable opportunities to participate in sports. Title IX does not require institutions to offer identical sports but an equal opportunity to play.
- Scholarships: Title IX requires that female and male student-athletes receive athletics scholarship dollars proportional to their participation; and
Other benefits: Title IX requires the equal treatment of female and male student-athletes in the provisions of:

- equipment and supplies, scheduling of games and practice times, travel and daily allowance/per diem, access to tutoring, coaching, locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities, medical and training facilities and services, housing and dining facilities and services, publicity and promotions, support services and recruitment of student-athletes.

Since October, 2018, the athletic department has taken strides to maintain compliance with Title IX in accordance with operational functions. Specifically, the department has taken the following steps to ensure compliance with certain items among the 11 “other benefits” that may have been lacking in the past:

- Equipment, supplies and uniforms: the athletic department has allocated appropriate funding in order to ensure that the women’s basketball program has items in line with the men’s programs at Avery Point. The bulk of previous expenditures were paid for from the women’s basketball Foundation account.
- Scheduling of practice and game times: Beginning with the 2019-20 academic year, changes were made to the game times of basketball doubleheaders in an effort to provide equitable opportunities (one team not always playing before or after the other). Practice times had previously been scheduled on a rotating basis by semester.
- Coaching: additional funding was allocated to provide a new paid staff position for the women’s basketball program beginning in the 2019-20 academic year.

The UConn Avery Point athletic department does not currently offer athletic scholarships. However, if the department exercises the option going forward (the next NJCAA declaration period occurs in 2021), the department will allocate appropriate funding to be in compliance.

However, the Athletic Director feels that as a part of this strategic plan, additional opportunities for participation must be provided to female student-athletes on the Avery Point campus. For the latest Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act report (EADA) completed by the Athletic Director in December, 2020, the institution reported 492 full-time undergraduate students. Approximately 54% of those full time undergraduate students were female and 46% male.

However, for the same reporting period, the athletic department reported 79% of its student athletes as male, and only 21% as female.

The addition of teams, based on the current non-scholarship format, would increase undergraduate enrollment and potential revenue for the campus. The addition of just 15 new student-athletes could net upwards of $200,000 annually, even after potential costs for salaries, equipment, travel, etc.

In addition, the Athletic Director has proposed a plan for the reallocation and renovation of the current coaches’ locker room adjacent to the present women’s basketball team locker room. If completed, the newly transformed space would provide roughly the same amount of space as the
current men’s basketball team locker room and would also have additional amenities not present in the current men’s basketball team locker room.

**Objective:** Address current challenges and act on opportunities to improve the campus’ and athletic department’s Title IX status.

**Recommended Action Steps:**

- Potential to offer a survey of current UConn Avery Point undergraduate students in the spring, 2021 to determine interest in sport offerings not currently sponsored by the institution.
- The Athletic Director supports the addition of a new women’s sports program at UConn Avery Point to begin competition during the 2022-23 academic year. A new head coach would be hired during the 2021-22 academic year to begin recruiting for the following year. Potential sport options may include:
  - Women’s Cross Country
  - Women’s Half Marathon
  - Women’s Golf
  - Women’s Swimming
  - Women’s Volleyball
  - Women’s Track and Field
  - Biathlon and/or Triathlon
  - Women’s/Coed Sailing
- The Athletic Director will work with the Waterfront Program Coordinator to determine the feasibility of adding a collegiate sailing program.
  - According to data provided by the Waterfront Program Coordinator, “Only once in the past 6 years has female participation dropped below 50% annually (2016; 49.25%). The overall average for female participation for the past 6 years is 60%. In addition, members of AP Sailing regularly compete in the Spring and Fall Frostbite YC racing series on the Connecticut River in Essex, CT, as well as, on keelboats during the Summer in Eastern Connecticut Sailing Association (ECSA) regattas on Long Island Sound and Fishers Island Sound.”
- Evaluate the addition of potential club sports (volleyball, cheerleading) that could elevate to varsity/NJCAA status in future years.
- Complete applicable facility improvements in order to ensure compliance with Title IX.
- Continue to regularly monitor Avery Point athletics and its compliance with regards to Participation, Scholarship and Other Benefits.

**Facility/Equipment Upgrades**

UConn Avery Point’s athletic facilities are both highly visible and highly utilized by numerous groups during the course of any given calendar year, including but not limited to the campus community and external groups and individuals. Furthermore, the Athletic Center is a major source of revenue, reaching nearly $200,000 a year in pre-pandemic times.

Since October, 2018, the department has taken both minor and major steps in an effort to improve appearances in the Athletic Center and the campus baseball venue.
Among the previous improvements/enhancements, done independently and/or with the assistance of additional areas including the Campus Director, the Associate Campus Director and the Facilities Operations staff:

- In conjunction with Campus Director and Campus Operations Office, revamping of equipment and space for the UConn Avery Point Fitness Area (completed February, 2020).
- Completed long overdue (10 years) scoreboard upgrades in gymnasium for full operation during basketball games and outside events.
- Initiated and completed process for new ADA compliant chair in pool in conjunction with Office of Institutional Equity and Associate Campus Director.
- Enhanced game environment at home athletic events through purchase of new portable sound system for the gymnasium.
- Purchased pitching machines and field dragger for the baseball program.
- Completed process for purchase of a new athletics van.
- Minor enhancements such as painting, lane line replacement, new shower curtains in women’s public locker room, replacement of first aid kits, soap dispensers in public locker room showers.
- Addition of both a portable AED for athletics use, as well as a permanently mounted AED for Athletic Center use.

In addition, the Athletic Director compiled a list of approximately 150 items within the Athletic Center during the winter, 2020. This list was shared with the Associate Campus Director and the Director of Facilities Operations as part of a physical walkthrough that occurred in the winter, 2020.

**Objective:** Identify and move forward with projects for future advancement/improvement, including but not limited to:

- Reallocation of existing supplemental locker room to be transformed into space to serve as women’s basketball team locker room.
- New scoreboards in gymnasium to replace existing ones.
- Signage/branding for throughout Athletic Center, Fitness area and also potentially for the baseball venue, including but not limited to: door wraps, branding for gym padding, window decals, banners, windscreens, etc.
- Updated signage/branding for Washington Park.
- Removal of outdated equipment, banners, signage, etc. from the Athletic Center.
- Replacement of gymnasium floor.
- Replacement of current pool filter.
- Replacement of current lights in gymnasium.
- Storage bins/branded space on pool deck and throughout Athletic Center.
- Storage evaluation for practice baseball field.
- Main lobby “pride” display, including but not limited to Hall of Fame and various team showcases.
- Reallocation of additional space for optimal functionality, including but not limited to: secondary janitor’s closet in men’s public locker room, transformation of Scott Martin’s office for general use, storage opportunities in main lobby.
Evaluation of current department transportation options for teams, especially if new programs are added.

Addition of “barriers” (shrubbery, signage, fencing, etc.) to discourage public use of external Avery Point athletic venue.

**Recommended Action Steps:**

- Comprise and analyze costs for various projects, with work to be completed in phases.
- Consult with appropriate campus areas/individuals, including Campus Director, Associate Campus Director and Director of Facilities Operations.
- Initial phase of projects to be identified prior to end of 2020-21 academic year, with work for phase one to begin during 2021-22 academic year.
- Continue to evaluate and identify projects for future improvements and complete projects annually as funding is available.

**Esports**

Over the course of the past several years, esports has taken off on college campuses across the United States. At the present time, the NJCAA has developed a separate esports wing to provide opportunities for student-athletes. Several schools within Region XXI (CCRI, Bunker Hill, NECC, Mass Bay, Bristol CC) are currently offering esports. Larger affiliation opportunities are present through the NECC ESports organization, along with NACE.

**Objective:** In conjunction with the Campus Director, Associate Campus Director, Campus IT Director and Director of Student Activities, determine the feasibility of offering esports at UConn Avery Point.

**Recommended Action Steps:**

- Research and identify costs for annual operation.
- Determine current campus technological capabilities based on recommended standards.
- Gauge campus undergraduate interest in this opportunity, whether through surveys or specific informational sessions. Could also be included in recruiting/admissions process, along with Orientation programming.

**Waterfront Programming**

The campus supports a vibrant Waterfront Programming initiative under the direction of the Waterfront Program Coordinator. Over the course of the past several years, the program has thrived. After setting a new record for winter sails in 2019 (32), the record was shattered in 2021 (40 and counting).

The Waterfront Program is a point of pride for the campus and a unique experience that provides students with both tangible life skills, the opportunity for personal growth and problem solving skills.
Objective: To determine, during the course of this strategic plan, the opportunities and role for Waterfront Programming on the UConn Avery Point campus. This could be included, but not limited to:

- Varsity sport status (sailing)
- Official club sport status (sailing)
- Role as recreational programming for:
  - Campus Community: faculty, staff, students
  - Alumni
  - Other friends/family
  - Community members
  - Outside partners (schools, municipalities, etc.)

Recommended Action Steps:

- Evaluate current campus interest for potential expansion of Waterfront Programming opportunities, including but not limited to:
  - Campus Community: faculty, staff, students
  - Alumni
  - Other friends/family
  - Community members
  - Outside partners (schools, municipalities, etc.)
  - Platform for hosting courses that provide certifications for campus/external community
  - Internship opportunities in conjunction with Sports Management and/or Kinesiology academic programs
- Research and identify costs for annual operation if expansions occurred.
- Provide continued support for Waterfront Programs staff, equipment and resources, such as:
  - Kayaks/boats/sails
  - Supplementary equipment such as:
    - Kayaking/paddle boarding rack
    - Hitch for trailer
    - Second or larger shed for Waterfront Programing
    - Wi-Fi and/or power at existing shed
- Ensure that any necessary certifications are secured as a part of potential growth (US Sailing IT, USCG, etc.)

Recreation/Intramurals/Club Sports

Objective: Develop and provide more robust recreational programming above and beyond the current Waterfront offerings.

Potential opportunities include: kickball, dodgeball, spikeball, basketball, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, flag football, strength and conditioning, aquatics/water aerobics/swimming, volleyball and floor hockey.
A current challenge, due to the lack of a residence hall on campus and large commuter and working student population, is the ability to provide programming during the traditional evening hours that these events often take place on a college campus.

**Recommended Action Steps:**

- Evaluate current campus interest for potential expansion of recreational programming opportunities.
- The Athletic Director should join NIRSA and participate in workshops and/or the annual conference.
- Collaborate with Storrs recreational department to determine potential programming opportunities, along with the potential to host interns or other staff.
- Explore, based on potential interest, opportunity for intramural program and/or club sport potential for sports that originated in the recreational phase for varsity status.

**Student-Athlete Experience**

Continue to provide ongoing communication and evaluation of:

- Academic support
- Advising support
- Life Skills
- Transportation
- Meals
- Equipment/apparel
- Physical health (athletic training, strength and conditioning, etc.)
- Mental health and wellbeing (Mental Health Resource Center, yoga, etc.)

The department will continue to garner feedback based on annual year-end exit surveys from all student-athletes, along with additional dialogue and discussion in person, virtually, and in team, individual and small group settings.
**Athletic Director’s Core Principles:**

**COMMUNICATE** – in all forms, at any time of the morning, afternoon or night, in order to best serve our students and the university mission

**COLLABORATE** – as an active force and positive agent of change within the campus and external communities

**CREDIBILITY** – achieve our goals and objectives “the right way”, without the aid of shortcuts or by breaking rules/laws

**COMPETE** – in and out of the classroom, for the privilege of being ambassadors for the UConn-Avery Point community

**CARE** – promote a family and welcoming environment for all constituents, but especially our students

**Driving Principles to focus on for the duration of this Strategic Plan:**

- Continue to evaluate the needs of the student-athletes and programs to provide our student-athletes with a first-rate experience academically, athletically and socially, and to provide our teams with the opportunity to compete on the regional level and beyond.
- Utilize existing facilities and resources to maximize rental or other revenue generating opportunities.
- Aggressively pursue new revenue streams through donations, corporate sponsorship agreements, apparel/merchandise sales, etc.
- Ensure that our student-athletes continue to progress towards graduation and post academic marks that are consistently higher than the general undergraduate student population.
- Serve as a key campus partner and resource for all students, faculty and staff with various offerings to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.
- Collaborate with internal and external constituents in a transparent fashion.
Projects and Initiatives

Time Frame: Objectives are projected for completion during the 2020-21 academic year.

- Implementation of National Student Athlete Day
- Research opportunities for Athletics website
- Create athletic department Visitor’s Guide
- Update Corporate Sponsorship Document
- Planning for Hall of Fame event
- Planning for next department Golf Tournament
- Research for social justice initiatives/programming
- Research branding opportunities
- Begin evaluation process of esports
- Identify projects for facility improvements to be completed in future years
- Research Life Skills options
- Finalize onboarding checklist
- Develop Student-athlete experience FAQ (from application through graduation) document
- Initiate Title IX sports sponsorship options/survey
- Identify Corporate sponsors
- Research and identify potential former Avery Point/UConn individuals for Life Skills programming

Time Frame: Objectives are projected for completion during the 2021-22 academic year.

- Implement opportunities for Athletics website
- Implement social justice initiatives/programming
- Research/execute branding and logo redesign opportunities
- Activate SAAC and/or Social Justice committees
- Host a campus wide initiative (event held in gymnasium) for “Be The Match” event to support the National Marrow Donor Program
- Develop, plan and execute (COVID conditions permitting) for an in person 2022 Girls and Women in Sports Day event at UConn Avery Point. Plan for virtual opportunity if in person conditions do not permit
- Begin process of identifying and/or appoint a Faculty Athletics Representative
- Introduce new sport offering for 2022-23 academic year and appoint head coach
- Discuss and evaluate opportunities for waterfront programming, including potential for elevation to club and/or varsity status
- Continue to research esports opportunities and if feasible, begin implementation of esports programs
- Begin first phase of athletic facility projects
- Create the Pointer Pride Challenge
- Cultivate and make asks for corporate sponsorship opportunities within the region
- Enhance content to reach stated social media metrics and increase traffic/interest
Time Frame: Objectives are projected for completion during the 2022-23 academic year and beyond.

- Athletic Director to reevaluate progress of initiatives identified for completion in 2020-21 and 2021-22 in spring, 2022 to determine appropriate course of action for future academic years.

Respectfully submitted by Michael Kobylanski, Athletic Director

March 11, 2021