



REINSTATE

Case for Reinstatement of Men's Track & Field Central Michigan University

Prepared by the Committee to Reinstatement



Mission

Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Mission

As alumni and friends of the Central Michigan University Men's Track & Field Program, we are united in our desire to provide solutions to the University to influence a reversal of the decision to terminate the program. Beyond reinstatement, we commit to the creation of a non-profit organization dedicated to sustain the program for the long term.

Data and information has been presented in four areas of concern to the University:



Diversity



Community



Finance



Funding



Diversity

Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Diversity

President Davies, In your helpful remarks "The Great Task Before Us" posted on May 31st after the brutal murder of George Floyd, you shared "I believe we can, and will, achieve a future that welcomes, respects and embraces all people." You followed up two weeks later on June 15th in your post "Our Promise to Address Racism and Hate" sharing that "in recent days, current and former black and African American students have reached out on social media to share their experiences with racism at CMU." You promised to do better and we look forward to being a part of that journey with you in the days and years to come. We believe sports like the Track & Field program provide opportunity for minority student-athletes. Eliminating a program like CMU Men's Track & Field means there are less slots for Division I caliber minority student-athletes to land. Building upon your personal commitment to inclusion and our rich range of experiences and skills, coupled with our enduring commitment to our alma mater, we are honored to offer solutions that help you keep those promises, with the following areas where we can provide assistance.

Enrollment

Aware that CMU has faced some five years of declining enrollment in its African-American student-athlete population (as part of an overall decline in Freshman enrollment over the past decade), we are committed to assisting the university with overall recruitment and outreach to students of color. We believe the Men's Track & Field program provides the university with a very valuable pipeline which we are well positioned to access and develop.

Campus Climate, Student Retention and Graduation



Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Based on student reports and Dr. Senter's survey reports ⁽¹⁾ we understand the experience for students of color needs to improve and offer our support to assist your various staff persons in accomplishing this objective. As we see in the corporate community, the positive treatment of employees of color is the best recruitment tool as their endorsement speaks loudly to potential employees of color. Assistance to be provided by Steve Spreitzer, President and CEO of the MI Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion (CMU Class of 79, former MAC Champion and Finch Fieldhouse 1000 yard run record holder).

⁽¹⁾ 61% of students of color at CMU have heard negative comments about a racial or ethnic group from other students on campus (Senter, 2015, p 19). CMU students do report attitudes and experiences that reflect a negative climate for diversity. (Senter, 2015, p 34.) Taken from the Reports and Surveys section of the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion website <https://www.cmich.edu/diversity/OID/Pages/Reports-and-Surveys.aspx>

Opportunity

A collegiate Track & Field program provides opportunity for minority student-athletes. Eliminating a program like CMU Men's Track & Field means there are less slots for Division I caliber minority student-athletes to land. Being aware of your personal commitment to inclusion, we want to offer solutions that help you keep those promises.

Racial Diversity in Athletics

This systematic elimination of scholarship and participation opportunities in Track & Field have wide reaching devastating effects on the African American community. Central Michigan University should realize that the sport of Track & Field has a unique significance and cultural influence within the hearts and minds of Black America.

National Impact

Historical examples of this have been ingrained in all of us. From the inspirational and remarkable performance against white supremacy in the 1936 Olympic games by Jesse Owens to the courageous and earth shattering protest on the medal stand by Tommie Smith and John Carlos in the 1968 Olympic games of Mexico City. Track & Field has been the platform Black athletes have used to demonstrate and express their strength, power, speed as well their experience and identity as Black Americans. Long before the images of Colin Kapernick and other professional athletes kneeling before the national anthem in protest of racism and discrimination, it was the image of the two black young men raising their fists against the oppression facing them at home in the United States of America. It has been individuals in the sport of Track & Field who have demonstrated the courage and leadership in the fight against racism and social inequality. When a University eliminates Track & Field from their athletic program, they are sending a strong negative message to the African American community.

NCAA

Throughout the history of the NCAA until present day there are mainly three (3) sports African Americans have traditionally participated in. Those sports are football, basketball and Track & Field. When CMU and other colleges choose to eliminate Track & Field they are directly making a decision to essentially eliminate one third of the athletic opportunities for Black athletes. This elimination of opportunity questions the college's and NCAA mission and priorities. For the past 48 years, the NCAA has adopted Gender Equity which grants equal opportunities for males and females. However, there will not be true equity until colleges recognize that due to the socioeconomic disparity that exists in today's society, minorities do not have equal opportunities to participate in sports. Men's and Women's Track & Field should be mandatory and should never be eliminated at the collegiate level.

- Track & Field is universally considered the first sport
- High School Track & Field has the highest participation rates
- Due to the low cost to participate in Track & Field the sport does not inherently discriminate

Mid-Major Universities

The MAC and Central Michigan have the unique opportunity to recruit and develop Black student-athletes in particular in the sport of Track & Field. Major conference track programs place a significant recruiting emphasis on the "can't miss" blue chip athlete or the highly accomplished international athlete. That leaves a tremendous void for many black high school Track & Field athletes. The academic, athletic and social experience of the mid-major school produces an atmosphere and environment conducive to the growth and development of many athletes. This academic and athletic development also creates the opportunity for students to develop leadership qualities. Throughout the years, CMU and the MAC have produced countless profiles of Black and Hispanic young men who were not highly recruited, with marginally successful athletic and academic backgrounds, and provided the platform for these athletes to develop into tremendous leaders within the African American community and beyond. The following are just four (4) examples taken from the 1990 Central Michigan University track team coached by Jim Knapp.



Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

- [Rodney Lackey](#)
- [Alfred Washington](#)
- [Lorenzo Berlanga](#)
- [Terrell Anderson](#)

Program Support for Minority Development

The CMU Track & Field Alumni committee would like the opportunity to sponsor and offer the Men's and Women's Track & Field Program the following:

1. Minority Recruiting Position - This position would assist the CMU athletic department in the recruitment of Track & Field student-athletes from under-represented groups in the state of Michigan and nationally.
2. Minority Recruiting Network - The CMU Track & Field Alumni group has been mobilized and is prepared to act in a scouting role identifying potential minority Track & Field recruits adhering to all NCAA recruiting guidelines.
3. Minority Track & Field Mentorship Program - The CMU Track & Field Alumni Minority Group will act as mentors with incoming CMU Track & Field first year student-athletes. The alumni mentors would be matched with student-athletes based upon academic majors and professional goals.

Track & Field Equals Diversity

Track & Field athletes have a unique understanding of diversity and dare I say inclusion and equity. Beginning with an appreciation of the multiple physical systems and behaviors involved in performing at a high level, Track & Field athletes learn that each system, e.g., cardio and circulo-respiratory and behavior, e.g., diet and rest, needs to be developed as part of a unified whole. We then quickly learn we need a range of athletes to make up a team, to train with and together face both our fears and joys. The range of 21 events which comprise a collegiate level Track & Field team are quite diverse, ranging from powerful sprinters to lean distance runners and from jumpers to throwers. Becoming a championship team is directly tied to have a diverse mix of athletes.

“ I owe a debt of gratitude to my teammates from the CMU Track & Field teams I was a part of from 1974 to 1979. I was not able to articulate the above thoughts at that time and certainly was not able to thank each one of you, however as I write these words, I am filled with tears of gratitude. Thank you for being a part of my family and inviting me to be a part of yours. I also want to thank the 500+ CMU alumni and former athletes, the dozen or so who are part of the leadership team and our leaders: former assistant coach Kent Baker, former head coach Jim Knapp and former Track & Field athlete Ted Rockett. It is an awesome feeling to be connected not just to the team I was a part of for five years, but to the members of the CMU Women's and Men's Track & Field teams of the past 40 years. Our Diversity is our strength and will serve us well as we help CMU to one day restore the Men's Track & Field Program. ”

– Steve Spreitzer

To look at a photograph of a college Track & Field team, is to see these differences personified in all body types and races, with international athletes often part of the team. Gender diversity is achieved as women and men train together, sharing the same facilities and coaches.

The bonding among athletes is perhaps the most enduring aspect of our sport, but it is not uncommon as groups of people who endure prolonged physical and mental challenges together while making numerous sacrifices, e.g., military service units. By virtue of this experience Track & Field athletes have an opportunity to come to know their teammates in profoundly deep ways, leading them to first rethink any previous information about the "other" or simple ignorance as so many of us are raised in homogeneous communities. We may see the "other" in a public space, but rarely visit their homes, hear their stories, eat their food and share their hopes and sorrows. While we may enter our college years as relationally challenged, we can't help but leave as culturally competent.

Knowing the "other" leads us to care about them. We are keen to notice when someone we care about is harmed, excluded or oppressed. For many, this action is reserved for family members. For Track & Field athletes, we are part of a larger, more diverse family. One virtue Track & Field athletes develop is humility, which is perhaps the most important quality needed to listen to sometimes difficult information about racial, gender and other forms of inequity. Another quality Track & Field athletes develop is courage to do the difficult training necessary to take one to the next level of performance and to risk failure. This courage is necessary to become allies, responding to the call to risk safety to stand with the "other."



Track & Field Community



Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Track & Field Community

Not only is Track & Field arguably the [Best Sport in the World](#), the Track & Field Community at Central is like nowhere else. We are family. If you look at many of the names of the student-athletes over the years, you will see brothers, fathers and sons. The brotherhood is not only reflected by relatives, but extends to everyone who competed together, donated, or simply rooted for the Maroon and Gold.

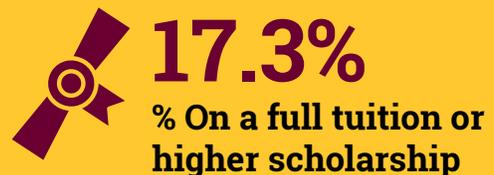
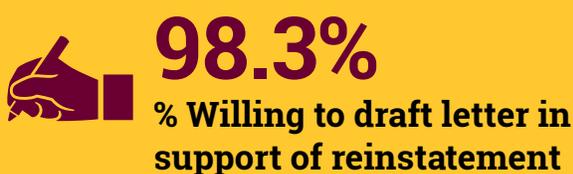
Beyond the men who have worn the spikes for the Chippewas for many decades, there are also great relationships between the men and women. The current women face the prospect of not having their brothers at their side, like those who came before them.

There is a love for the program that is deep. We have over 600 Track & Field alumni and friends supporting our efforts thus far.

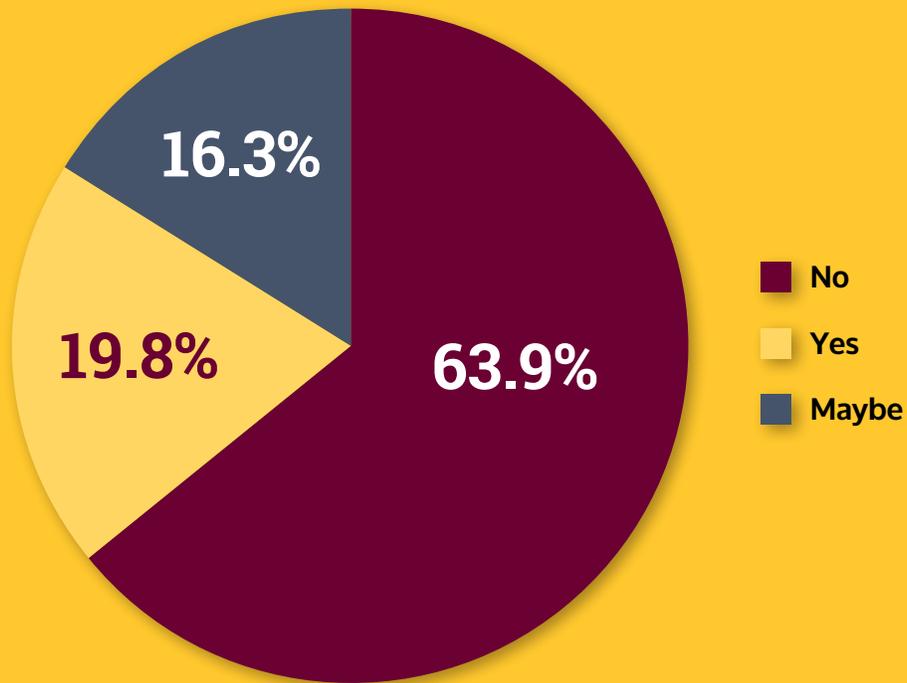
The best way to express what the program means to us is through stories and accomplishments. Here are examples of the type of men who have gone through the Central Michigan program:

- [Bill Taylor](#)
- [Todd Patulski](#)
- [Kirk Deitsch](#)
- [Steve Wolf](#)

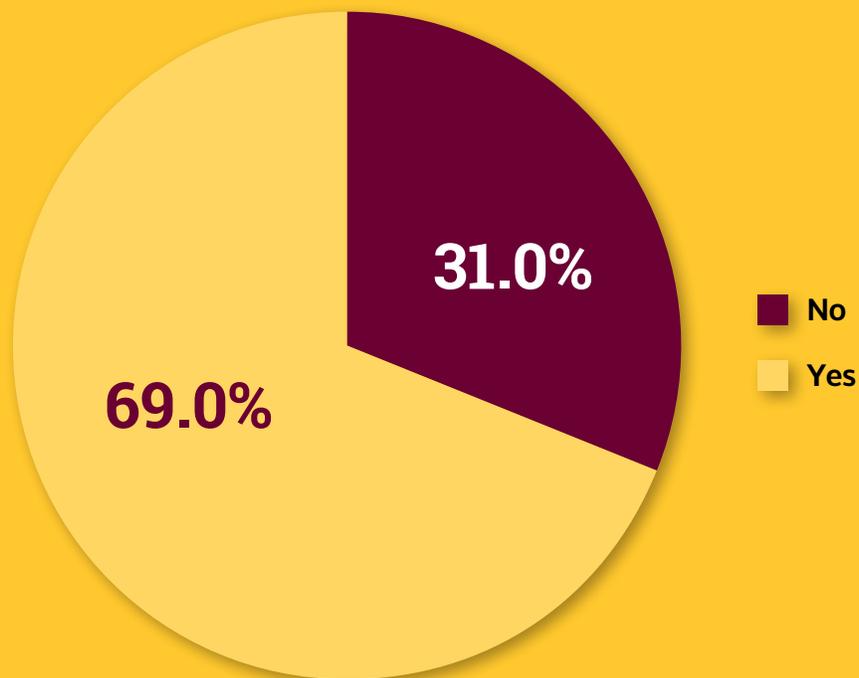
We understand this decision was not made on emotion, so we need to present more than our heart on our sleeve to make a strong case. With that in mind, here is some data taken from a survey of our supporters.



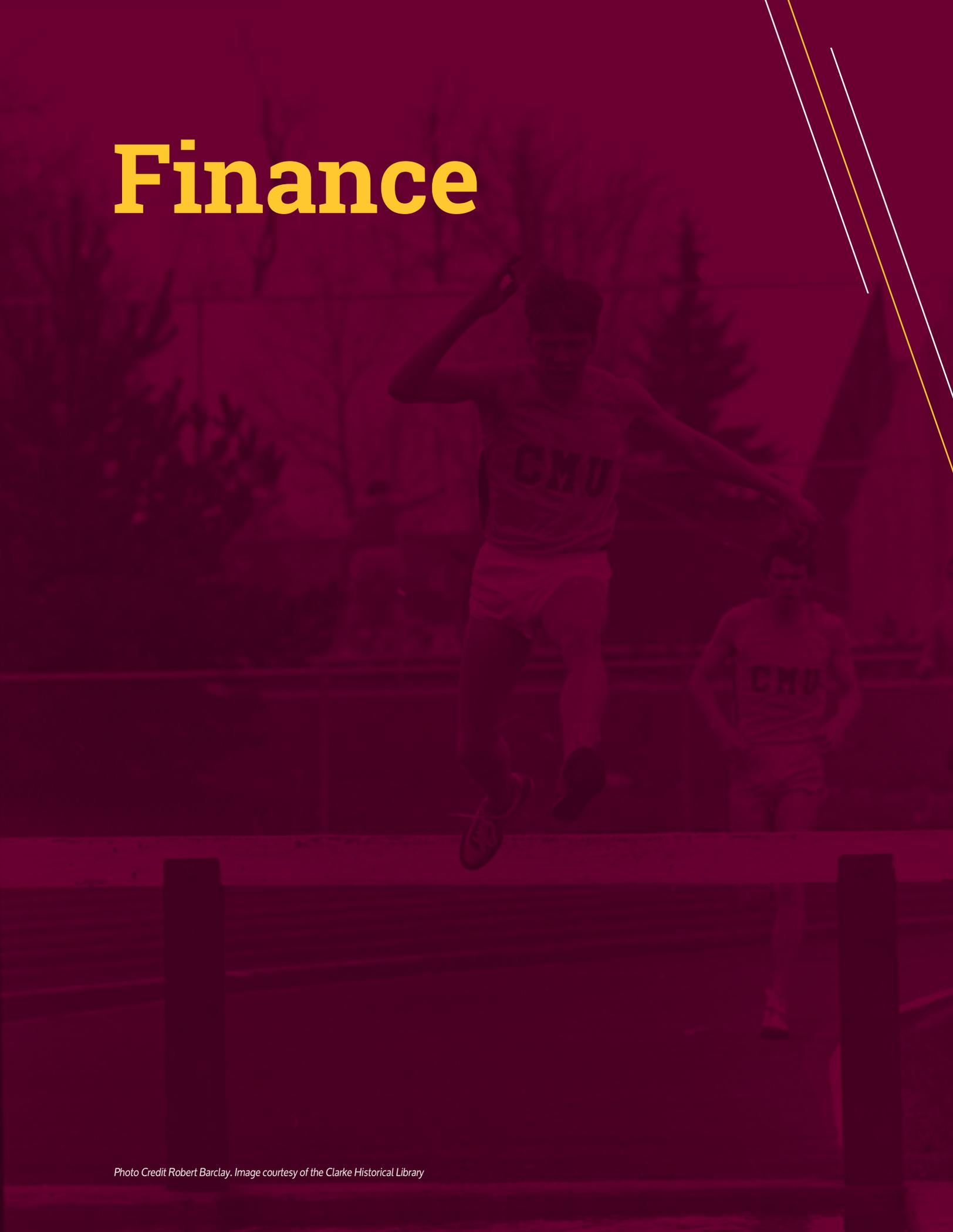
Would you have attended CMU if they did not have a men's Track & Field program?



Did other family member and friends attend CMU?



Finance



Finance

It is our contention that sports like Track & Field can actually generate enough revenue to cover their expenses and in some cases make money for the university. It may not look that way when looking at the Athletics Department’s budget, but when you consider the positive impact of the tuition dollars that are not covered by athletic aid you can begin to see the full picture. This opinion is supported by various external sources as well as the data that we have collected.

In light of the current situation, we understand CMU needs to make some tough decisions. We recognize the general budget has decreased nearly 12% year over year as a result of the pandemic and that the Athletics Department’s subsidy from the university has decreased around 18.8%. We all recognize the value that athletics provides to not only the student-athletes, but also campus and the Mt. Pleasant community. However, this decrease moves the subsidy back to what it was in the 2013-14 academic year, it represents a 12.4% increase from the 2010-11 academic year.

More specifically, we understand Track & Field is not considered a “revenue sport” consistent with the other equivalency sports offered by CMU. Overwhelmingly most group of five level football and basketball programs neither are measured by their ability to generate positive university income. As a result, the impact each program has on the university as a whole can be difficult to measure. Though we have seen trends by universities to cut sports, in a recent Sportico article, [MAYBE COLLEGES SHOULD BE ADDING SPORTS, NOT DROPPING THEM](#), Eben Novy-Williams argues that equivalency sports such as Track & Field have an opportunity to be a source of net income for colleges and that as the article’s title states, colleges should be adding sports, not dropping them.

The article uses three colleges in a case study to illustrate how adding equivalency sports can create and increase a surplus for the university and also improve Title IX compliance at the same time (see Figure 1). Interestingly, CMU is one of the colleges evaluated.

Three Financial Plans For Central Michigan				
	Total # of Athletes in Equivalency Sports	Total # of Equivalency Sports	Annual Deficit/ Surplus	Improves Title IX Compliance
Status Quo	271	9	\$370,479	
Adding 7 Sports	490	16	\$287,578	✓
Adding 7 Sports and Cutting 2 Sports	430	14	\$975,595	✓

Source: FY 2019 budget documents, analysis by Andy Schwarz, with assistance from Anthony Crudup

Consider this assertion made in the article:

At Central Michigan, for example, men's Track & Field/cross country, women's field hockey, women's lacrosse and women's Track & Field/cross-country all make money for the school. In a world where Central Michigan could essentially clone seven of its nine non-revenue sports, Schwarz calculates the school could bring in an additional \$658,000 per year. It would create an annual surplus for the entire group of equivalency sports, add opportunities for 215 more athletes, increase enrollment and improve the school's Title IX compliance in both female participation and financial proportionality.

We are not recommending that CMU necessarily add more sports beyond reinstatement of Men's Track & Field. However this position certainly supports our compelling argument that Men's Track & Field does not create the financial hardship it may seem at first glance when looking at Central's Athletic Department budget.

We believe athletics departments are making a mistake in how they view these sports and that is resulting in sports being cut when the budget is stressed. We believe this is what happened when CMU's Athletic Director opted to eliminate Men's Track & Field, as he did not look to see how that decision would negatively impact CMU holistically.

In addition, the elimination of Men's Track & Field has left CMU in a position where in order to maintain NCAA Div I status, another varsity men's team will need to be added within two years. One team that has been mentioned as a replacement and is offered by the Mid American Conference is Men's Golf. It could be viewed as advantageous to CMU based upon the lower operating expenses associated with the sport. According to Data obtained from Equity in Athletics Data Analysis (EADA), the national average net deficit for a Men's Track & Field team in 2018 was \$718,075 while the equivalent for Men's Golf was \$313,695.

Clearly the disparity is significant on the surface. However, there are multiple factors that need to be considered which bring these numbers much closer. The three factors that go into the budget for the track team are:

1. Operating expenses
2. Athletic financial aid
3. Personnel



Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Below is a review each of these aspects of the team's budget.

Operating Expenses

Many of the expenses of the men's team are shared with the women's team. Items included in this category are recruiting, marketing, travel, game day, facilities, equipment, debt, medical and dues. Certainly there would be savings in areas of athletic supplies and hotels however there are many expenses such as team buses, meet officials, timing system, hurdles, pits, and other meet operations are shared between the teams and do not constitute savings when there is only one team. It would be difficult to provide an accurate estimate of the savings that would come from sharing these resources. Due to this, we have not assigned a dollar value to these savings, but will make the point that there likely would be some savings over what is reported in the operating expenses.

Athletic Financial Aid

For any sport, athletic department's scholarships are recorded as accounting expense, whereas the income from tuition, fees, room and board is not represented as departmental income. Since CMU does not cap enrollment, any student-athlete who enrolls at CMU is not taking the spot of another tuition paying student. That partial scholarship student-athlete represents a paying customer. If that student-athlete does not attend CMU their contribution is lost. In survey data that we collected, 83% of those responded reported that if they received an athletic scholarship for any part of their time at CMU, they received less than their tuition, leaving the remaining paying all or part of their tuition. As a result, the athletic aid that is spent could largely be looked at as a discount to tuition instead of an expense.

An argument that is meant to counter the attribution of these tuition funds to the athletic opportunity is that many of the student athletes would have attended CMU whether the opportunity existed or not. This argument is simply not valid. This is supported by the survey data we collected which showed that less than 20% of the student-athletes who responded stated that they would have attended CMU if the opportunity in athletics had not existed. The vast majority of student-athletes in any Division I program chose the school based on the athletic opportunity. If they did not have the opportunity at the school they chose, they would have instead attended another school providing the same opportunity. While there may be some who would not have chosen the same university, we believe those numbers are counterbalanced by those who came to CMU for the opportunity but discontinued their participation in athletics and continued enrollment at CMU, and by the friends and family members who selected CMU because of the student-athlete's choice. Therefore, we are using the tuition of the full roster for revenue purposes.

To illustrate the overall impact, it is helpful to look at the tuition surplus. There are roughly 36 roster spots and while the NCAA allows 12.6 full Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Awards for Men's Track & Field, CMU is only reporting 9 full GIA's available to be divided among the team members.

The tuition for the 2020-21 year is set at \$12,510 lower level, \$13,020 upper level. We are assuming an equal split between lower and upper level students for this evaluation. The full GIA is based on the cost of attendance determined by CMU which is \$26,016. When we place these numbers side by side with another small roster team such as men's golf, we see that there is a significantly greater tuition income with Men's Track & Field than with Men's Golf.

Roster Size Scholarship Count Tuition Received Athletic Aid

	Men's Track & Field	Men's Golf
Roster Size	36	8
Scholarship Count	9	3.6
Tuition Received	\$459,540	\$102,120
Athletic Aid	\$234,144	\$93,657
Tuition Surplus	\$225,396	\$8,463

Not only is there a greater tuition income with the Men's Track & Field team, there are significantly more opportunities for participation. A comparison between most other equivalency sports would show similar results due to the size of the roster for a Track & Field team.

When we account for the income received from the Men's Track & Field team we see that the expense to the university based on the average team in the MAC, the overall net expense has gone from \$718,085 to \$258,545.

Personnel

The EADA data shows the average personnel cost for a Men's Track & Field team in the MAC is \$222,261, but may be misleading for our circumstances. This data is for a team that is separate from a women's team, has a head coach and two assistant coaches. When CMU's men's team was cut there were two coaches eliminated from the coaching staff. These two coaches were assistant coaches and were the two newest coaches to the staff. The savings from these two positions was minimal and nowhere near the number reported for EADA. The compensation for a graduate assistant comes in the form of a tuition waiver and a stipend. The tuition waiver can be viewed similarly to the athletic aid in that it is tuition that would not have come to CMU if the student had not enrolled. With an annual stipend of \$15,000, this would result in a total cost to CMU of \$30,000.

With this option, we are able to reduce the personnel cost from \$222,261 to \$30,000 for an additional reduction of \$192,261 off of the average cost in the EADA data.

Furthermore, our argument would be that if every men's team is afforded the maximum number of assistant coaches and the women's track and field team is disadvantaged by having two less than the maximum allowed, you may be creating a Title IX issue for CMU and will soon be adding back the previously eliminated coaches, thus resulting in no savings at all.

Additional Revenue Opportunity

Division I Track & Field programs are a model for high school track teams within their region and state. This can translate into revenue generated by operating annual high school track meets (indoor and outdoor). CMU held the Chip Relays for decades drawing teams from all over Michigan for a price. The possibility for a meet like this to be a draw, as the Chip Relays were, becomes minimal with the lack of a men's program.

Conclusion

The examples we have provided help support the argument that Novy-Williams is making that Men's Track & Field often makes money for a university. With the compensating factors presented, we are able to show net income of \$27,906 for CMU. As a result, we feel that it was a financial mistake to remove the Men's Track & Field Team for financial reasons. This decision could continue to cost CMU money as the Athletic Department will need to add another team in two years. Whatever team is selected, it will not have nearly 100 years of history behind it with countless alumni supporting the team. This is a mistake and we hope to be part of the solution.



Funding



Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Funding

We are willing to work with the University to create an alumni, friends and corporate funding strategy. Track & Field has a large alumni group to lean on with a number of grads willing to step up.

This fundraising, while helping to counter the economic hardship caused by COVID-19, will also aim to support the minority development initiatives cited earlier in our report to include:

- Minority Recruiting Position
- Minority Recruiting Network
- Minority Track & Field Mentorship Program

In addition to these commitments, we will also commit to expand the efforts of our group to partner with the University with the goal of influencing future enrollment of the general student population (not just athletics).

We are about solutions and prosperity. Let's turn this around together.

Summary



Photo Credit Robert Barclay. Image courtesy of the Clarke Historical Library

Summary

We are living in a time of social awakening. It's time to look at decisions like this with a view on who it impacts and if it allows us to be social leaders. Central Michigan University has an opportunity, under your vision, to recognize the way to opportunity, financial prosperity and inclusion is not to eliminate programs like this, but to grow them.



The Committee to Reinstate Men's Track & Field

Kent Baker | Director of Physical Education and Athletics, Great Lakes Academy
Former Assistant Coach CMU Men's Track & Field

Carey Hammel | Operations and Administration Director, Mid Michigan Area Cable Consortium
Head Track Coach, Shepherd High School | CMU Alumnus '06

Christoffer Heggelund | Chief Customer Officer, RegEd Software | Track & Field Alumnus '97

Alec Hewett | Manager, U.S. Paralympics Track & Field at United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee
Track & Field Alumnus '15

Jim Knapp | CMU Men's Track & Field Head Coach (Retired) | HOF '14

Joel Krafsur, esq. | Track & Field Alumnus

Rodney Lackey | Associate Athletics Director, Texas Tech University | Track & Field Alumnus '89

Ethan Lievense | Coordinator, Olympic Games Event Management, NBC Sports Group
Track & Field Alumnus '15

Todd Patulski | Senior Associate Athletics Director - Chief Financial Officer, Liberty University
Track & Field Alumnus '90

Greg Pilling | Systems Administration Manager, Teachers Credit Union | Track & Field Alumnus '10

Ted Rockett | Executive Producer, IMC Experiences | Track & Field Alumnus '84

Janell (Best) Vier | Preschool Teacher | Women's Track & Field Alumna '86

Steve Spreitzer | President and CEO, Michigan Roundtable for Diversity & Inclusion
Track & Field Alumnus '79

Steve Wolf | Principal, Oxford High School | Track & Field Alumnus '05

Keela Yount | Proprietor & Pedorthist, Mid-Michigan Pedorthic Clinic | Women's Track & Field Alumna
Former Women's Head Cross Country | Track & Field Coach