

## **The Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC)**

### **PSAC Strategic Plan: 2010-2014**

#### **PSAC MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the PSAC is to provide an organizational structure that enhances intercollegiate athletics competition among member institutions in an environment that recognizes the student-athletes' academic experience as the vital part of the educational process.

#### **PSAC VISION STATEMENT**

The PSAC will maintain a highly competitive athletics atmosphere while encouraging outstanding academic achievement. The conference will continue to place primary emphasis on the welfare of the student-athlete and the development of individual life skills while promoting gender and racial equity. Conference institution personnel will be encouraged to seek opportunities to provide leadership in the national governance structure.

#### **PSAC CORE VALUES**

The core values of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference are a commitment to:

- Establish and maintain policies and procedures that ensure student-athlete welfare, including sportsmanship with special attention to the physical and mental health, as well as safety of participants;
- Establish and maintain policies and procedures that enhance the opportunity for academic success of all student-athletes in order to increase graduation rates of all member institutions;
- Strive to attain the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity and fair play for all involved groups (student-athletes, coaches, staff, spectators, etc);
- Comply with all conference and NCAA legislation;
- Create an environment for participation on highly competitive teams at the conference, regional and national level;
- Uphold the value of equity and diversity in the organizational structure and leadership of the conference
- Consider economic impact of its decisions on member institutions;
- Recognize the dual objectives in the athletics program of serving both the campus (participants, student body, faculty and staff) and the general public (community, area, region and state); and
- Create an environment that recognizes the importance of the teaching and learning process in the athletics environment.

## Background

Formally organized in 1951 for the purpose of promoting and administering men's athletic programs within the 14 state teachers colleges in the Commonwealth, the PSAC has evolved into one of the NCAA's largest and most heralded intercollegiate athletic conferences. In 1977, due to the interest and growth of women's athletics, the conference was restructured to provide women's programs and now boasts a sponsorship of 23 championship sports, 12 on the women's side and 11 on the men's side. These championships include men's and women's tennis, men's and women's golf, field hockey, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer, football, women's volleyball, wrestling, men's and women's swimming, men's and women's indoor track and field, men's and women's basketball, women's lacrosse, softball, baseball and men's and women's outdoor track and field.

League presidents voted to solidify its membership in the NCAA in 1980 when all members were required to participate at the Division II level within the national association, after varied affiliations with Division III and the NAIA.

Membership in the PSAC remained unchanged until 2007 when two private universities (Gannon and Mercyhurst) were welcomed into the PSAC, thereby creating a conference consisting of 16 *full* member institutions. The addition of private member institutions was prompted by a need for the league to solidify sports sponsorship numbers in a variety of sports and to control a greater portion of the scheduling opportunities for league members

The 16 full members are: Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Gannon, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Mercyhurst, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock, and West Chester. A lone associate member, Long Island University-C.W. Post Campus, was also added in 2007, and participates in only two PSAC sports, football and field hockey.

The introduction of three new member universities (two full members, and one associate member) was approved by the PSAC Board of Directors on June 14, 2007, and athletic competition between the expanded list of member universities began in September 2008.

Because the actual expansion of the Conference took place prior to any new governance documents being drafted and agreed upon by the expanded Board of Directors, i.e., by the Board of Directors of the New PSAC, one purpose of this document is to remedy that situation by developing an appropriate governance document for the PSAC such as a strategic plan, and as well, e.g., a new/revised mission statement and new/revised bylaws for the board of directors of the PSAC. Additionally, the PSAC has filed the necessary paperwork to become an incorporated entity in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as filing for non-profit 501-c-3 status with the Internal Revenue Service.

## NCAA Division II

The PSAC became an NCAA Division II conference in 1980 and the Board of Directors of the New PSAC formally affirmed that affiliation on February 17, 2009.

As a consequence of that recent action, the strategic plan which follows will be anchored by the five (5) major Goals, Associated Priorities, and Standards found in the 2009-2012 NCAA

Division II Strategic Plan. But this strategic plan for the PSAC will go beyond those goals, priorities, and standards to emphasize others so as to more uniquely differentiate the PSAC from other athletic conferences in NCAA Division II.

An appropriate strategic plan for the PSAC will, of necessity, deal with many potential and actual interactions, tensions and required degrees of cooperation between individuals operating from at least five (5) different levels—(1) the Public, (2) the NCAA, (3) the New PSAC, (4) the Member Institutions, and (5) the Institutional Personnel (i.e., students, student-athletes, coaches, faculty and other institutional personnel). Fortunately, many of those issues have been codified over many years in existing NCAA Division II governance documents and will, to various degrees in this strategic plan, be adopted, modified or expanded in the PSAC governance documents, as decided by the Board of Directors of the PSAC.



## ***POSITIONING STATEMENT***

**Life in the Balance.** Higher education has lasting importance on an individual's future success. For this reason, the emphasis for the student-athlete experience in Division II is a comprehensive program of learning and development in a personal setting. The Division II approach provides growth opportunities through academic achievement, learning in high-level athletic competition and development of positive societal attitudes in service to community. The balance and integration of these different areas of learning opportunity provide Division II student-athletes a path to graduation while cultivating a variety of skills and knowledge for life ahead.

### ***Attributes Highlighted in a NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Experience:***

- **Learning:** multiple opportunities to broaden knowledge and skills
- **Service:** positive societal attitude through contributions to community
- **Passion:** enthusiastic dedication and desire in effort
- **Sportsmanship:** respect for fairness, courtesy; ethical conduct toward others
- **Resourcefulness:** versatile skill set drawn from broad range of experiences
- **Balance:** emphasis on collective knowledge; integration of skills

### ***Reasons to Believe in NCAA Division II:***

- Academic Success and Graduation Rates
- Athletics Scholarships/Unique Fiscal Model
- Championships Opportunities
- Community Partnerships
- Proud Alumni and Fans
- Innovative Solutions
- High-Level Athletics

### **Five Overarching PSAC Goals**

**Goal One: ACADEMICS AND LIFE SKILLS. Provide PSAC student-athletes a path to graduation while cultivating skills and knowledge for life ahead; impart learning in high-level athletics competition; develop student ethics, civility and leadership; and develop positive societal attitudes through service to community.**

Goal One stresses the importance of promoting and honoring student-athlete success, protecting student-athlete well-being, developing positive societal attitudes through contributions to community, providing opportunities for student-athletes to have an active role in the governance process, and fostering partnerships to enhance the success of both student-athletes and the student body.

**Goal Two: GOVERNANCE. Commit to institutional control by establishing a system for operations and compliance that is engaged and functioning.**

Goal Two emphasizes presidential commitment and involvement, leadership and professional development opportunities for athletics personnel, officials, coaches and faculty and commits conferences and institutions to effective, engaging and functioning compliance programs.

**Goal Three: COMPETITION. Provide fair and equitable competition and quality, positive and rewarding game day and conference championship experiences.**

Goal Three emphasizes the need to promote and enhance a quality student-athlete experience in athletics competition and conference championships and to ensure game environments are fair, competitive, safe, positive, respectful and entertaining.

**Goal Four: IDENTITY. Utilize the uniqueness of the PSAC in promoting its mission and vision as a positive contributor to its member institutions' communities.**

Goal Four promotes the PSAC's identity through collaborative partnerships and relationships; and strengthens the public's knowledge and appreciation for the PSAC.

**Goal Five: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION. Promote diversity and foster an environment of inclusion.**

Goal Five supports the importance, value, benefits and role of diversity and inclusion in higher education and intercollegiate athletics.

**Goal One: ACADEMICS AND LIFE SKILLS. Provide PSAC student-athletes a path to graduation while cultivating skills and knowledge for life ahead; impart learning in high-level athletics competition; develop student ethics, civility and leadership; and develop positive societal attitudes through service to community.**

Strategy 1.1: Promote and honor academic measures of success and retention, as well as student-athlete service and achievement through various PSAC platforms .

Action 1.1.1: Develop Conference recognition for highest team grade point average (GPA) in each sport across the Conference.

Action 1.1.2: Increase emphasis on academic achievements on PSAC website.

Action 1.1.3: Encourage member institutions to provide academic counseling and support services for student-athletes.

Action 1.1.4: Create an overall Academic Award for the league.

Action 1.1.5: Recognize student-athlete graduates from member schools in appropriate forums, publications and ceremonies.

Action 1.1.6: Emphasize and recognize membership in the Student-Athlete Honor Society.

Action 1.1.7: Increase academic support services for student-athletes by continued use of Academic Enhancement Grant at member campuses.

Action 1.1.8: Encourage institutions to employ class-scheduling policies that maximize class attendance for student-athletes.

Strategy 1.2: Provide leadership, development and service opportunities for student-athletes.

Action 1.2.1: Encourage participation in the NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills programs at each institution.

Action 1.2.2 Encourage and support a viable Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) on each campus and at the conference level.

Strategy 1.3: Protect the health, safety and well-being of student-athletes.

Action 1.3.1: Monitor member institutions educational support programs for Alcohol/Drug use and Hazing.

Action 1.3.2: Develop a Health & Safety committee that will review conference policies and activities.

Strategy 1.4: Promote strong university spirit through athletics by enhancing the partnerships and the integration among the conference, campus community and local communities to support and foster the success of student-athletes and the student body.

Action 1.4.1: Encourage use of faculty members as team mentors on campuses.

Action 1.4.2: Develop conference-wide recognition for Community Service project on campuses

Action 1.4.3: Emphasize participation in the Division II Community Engagement initiatives.

Action 1.4.4: Encourage Faculty Athletics Representatives (FARs) to take a more active role in promoting student-athlete academic achievements to faculty, staff and alumni of member campuses.

### **Primary Measures for Goal One**

- Academic Success Rate
- Federal Graduation Rate
- Academic Performance Census
- Team GPA monitoring
- PSAC Scholar-Athlete data
- Community Engagement “ideas that work” on NCAA DII website
- Number of Institutions participating in NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills program
- Number of Institutions participating in membership with S-A Honor Society

### **Goal Two: GOVERNANCE. Commit to institutional control by establishing a system for operations and compliance that is engaged and functioning.**

Strategy 2.1: Continue to enhance and support presidential commitment and involvement in the affairs of athletics at the institutional, conference and national levels.

Action 2.1.1: Encourage annual/semi-annual meetings on each campus of President, Vice Presidents in charge of athletics (VPs), SAAC leaders, FAR and Athletic Directors (AD) to review campus, conference and NCAA legislative issues.

Action 2.1.2: Encourage attendance by member institution presidents at the NCAA convention.

Action 2.1.3: Encourage attendance by FARs at PSAC meetings, annual Faculty Athletics Representatives Association (FARA) Symposium, NCAA Convention and compliance seminars.

Strategy 2.2: Provide leadership and development opportunities for VPs, athletics administrators, coaches and FARs.

Action 2.2.1: Develop methods to inform campus communities of the role/responsibilities of FARs, SAAC and Compliance Coordinator

Action 2.2.2: Encourage athletics administrators, faculty academic representatives and coaches to become involved with NCAA committees.

Action 2.2.3: Provide continuing education opportunities, for all appropriate constituencies within the league.

Action 2.2.4: Provide substantive support for and strengthen the role of the FAR on campuses and in league governance.

Strategy 2.3: Involve, enhance and recognize the role of VPs, athletics administrators, coaches and faculty and student-athletes in the governance process at the institutional, conference and national levels.

Action 2.3.1: Review May PSAC meeting structure to encourage attendance and participation.

Strategy 2.4: Develop, enhance and increase educational materials, resources (e.g., technology), tools and services that support and maintain an effective compliance system.

Action 2.4.1: Increase participation in NCAA Compliance Assistant Internet (CAi ) and on-campus participation of data transfer to CAi mainframe to improve campus monitoring of compliance issues.

Action 2.4.2: Establish “Transfer Clearinghouse” monitored by conference office that reviews all documentation for student-athletes transferring into the league.

Action 2.4.3: Continue hosting compliance workshops, meetings, conference calls for institutional personnel involved in NCAA rules compliance activities.

Action 2.4.4: Develop password-protected interpretation database for member institutions.

### **Primary Measures for Goal Two**

- Number of PSAC schools using the NCAA compliance assistant for internet (CAi) or other compliance software
- Secondary infractions reporting by institutions
- Number of national and conference office conducted compliance reviews
- Attendance by presidents at annual PSAC meetings and NCAA conventions
- Hosting annual compliance seminars for campus constituents
- Number of PSAC staff members on NCAA committees
- FAR participation in NCAA and PSAC meetings

**Goal Three: COMPETITION. Provide fair and equitable competition and quality, positive and rewarding game day and conference championship experiences.**

Strategy 3.1: Provide game environments, opportunities and atmospheres that are fair, competitive, safe, positive and respectful for student-athletes, coaches and officials, and entertaining and safe for fans and spectators.

Action 3.1.1: Require member institution’s to develop, maintain and report game management protocols including security requirements, game staff requirements and visiting team hosting requirements for each competition venue.

Action 3.1.2: Review, develop and enforce policies and procedures for evaluating officials.

Action 3.1.3: Continue to read and enforce the PSAC Sportsmanship Statement at all contests.

Action 3.1.4: Promote attendance at all PSAC events.

Action 3.1.5: Review conference scholarship maximum and minimums; and coaching staff limitations.

Strategy 3.2: Commit to fair and equitable competition by developing appropriate scheduling and championship qualifying and bracketing processes, policies and guidelines.

Action 3.2.1: Review conference divisional alignments, championship bracketing and championship qualifying.

Action 3.2.2: Review number of mandated and permissible contests for each sport.

Action 3.2.3: Establish a championship committee at the league level to continually review scheduling and championship play.

Action 3.2.4: Continue to encourage feedback from coaches group regarding playoff formats.

Strategy 3.3: Strengthen partnerships and relationships with host communities, schools, coaches associations, media and sponsors at the local, regional and national levels.

Action 3.3.1: Encourage member institutions to take a more proactive role in seeking out partnership opportunities.

Action 3.3.2: Establish and enhance sponsorship opportunities to support PSAC.

Action 3.3.3: Develop and enhance PSAC media days for football and basketball; consider adding other sport media days, if possible.

Strategy 3.4: Provide opportunities to develop and establish consistent standards in officiating and increase the pool of qualified officials.

Action 3.4.1: Create, maintain, and report on in-season coach/administrator evaluations of officials.

Action 3.4.2: Charge the Officiating Committee to annually evaluate officiating performance and make recommendations to the Commissioner regarding contract renewals for assignors.

Action 3.4.3: Increase START (Students of Today are Referees of Tomorrow) programs on campuses.

Strategy 3.5: Enhance and increase the use of resources (e.g., technology), tools and services to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of game day and conference championships' operations.

Action 3.5.1: Develop additional means to utilize public address announcements, video, music and other game day media to support positive game environment.

### **Primary Measures for Goal Three**

- Number of PSAC events and championships on television and/or broadband technology
- Total attendance at PSAC sporting events and championships (aggregate numbers)
- Number of ideas that work on game environment website
- Game environment award nominees and winners



**Goal Four: IDENTITY. Utilize the uniqueness of the PSAC in promoting its mission and vision as a positive contributor to its member institutions' communities.**

Strategy 4.1: Allocate funds and resources in a manner that recognizes and supports the unique characteristics and attributes of the PSAC.

Action 4.1.1: Promote new league membership/one-state locale.

Action 4.1.2: Create a fast-facts sheet about the league/schools that can be used for recruiting.

Strategy 4.2: Analyze and assess budget policies and procedures to position for new media contracts for the PSAC.

Action 4.2.1: Explore and develop conference corporate sponsorship programs.

Action 4.2.2: Encourage participation in the internet broadcasting of athletic events.

Action 4.2.3: Encourage institutions to promote all athletic events on radio and TV.

Strategy 4.3: Attract and retain conference members that support the strategic position and philosophy of the PSAC.

Action 4.3.1: Continue conference representation/presentations on DII strategic planning/game environment and community engagement.

Action 4.3.2: Expand media coverage to other aspects of campus.

Action 4.3.3: Place greater emphasis on sportsmanship in defining the PSAC to the world

Action 4.3.4: Promote "I Chose Division II" extensively in branding the PSAC.

Strategy 4.4: Develop and facilitate tools that assist active member institutions with evaluating their position in conjunction with the strategic position and philosophy of PSAC intercollegiate athletics.

Action 4.4.1: Create opportunities to gather information to compare PSAC to other conferences.

Action 4.4.2: Encourage member institutions to annually review NCAA Division II Model Athletics Department document in evaluation of services, programming and staffing.

Strategy 4.5: Promote the use of tools that assess the value of intercollegiate athletics and strengthen the awareness of the PSAC and its characteristics and attributes, and the achievements of PSAC student-athletes. Promote civic engagement opportunities at member institutions at the local, state, national and international levels.

Action 4.5.1: Expand opportunities to promote positive academic stories/data of league, including promotion of Academic All-America,

Action 4.5.2: Promote institutional/conference participation in community engagement, service and game environment initiatives as well as civic engagement opportunities at the local, state, national and international levels.

Action 4.5.3: Utilize conference website as a clearinghouse of all media sources and televised games.

Strategy 4.6: Enhance communication and partnerships with the media, host communities, schools, coaches' associations and sponsors at the local, regional and national levels to provide opportunities for communicating the unique characteristics and attributes of the PSAC.

Action 4.6.1: Create "media kit" for conference and member institutions, that highlights unique characteristics and attributes of the league and its members.

Action 4.6.2: Expand promotion of media days for football and basketball

Action 4.6.3: Encourage use of social networking opportunities to promote institutional and conference athletic programming and activities.

Strategy 4.7: Develop and implement a "branding" campaign for the new PSAC.

Action 4.7.1: Increase visibility of Conference/member institutions with banner displays at venues.

Action 4.7.2: Consider requirement of Conference logo on member uniforms.

Action 4.7.3: Develop Conference-wide media promotion opportunities in TV, Radio and Webcasting.

Action 4.7.4 Develop systems to promote conference website on campuses (website, banners).

#### **Primary Measures for Goal Four**

- Number of unique website visits to PSAC website
- PSAC stories in local, regional and national papers
- Community engagement award nominees and winners
- Participation by conference members with Make-A-Wish and other charitable organizations

#### **Goal Five: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION. Promote diversity and foster an environment of inclusion.**

Strategy 5.1: Continue to partner and build collaborative relationships with other organizations to support and enhance the diversity of administrators, coaches and student-athletes at the local, conference and national levels.

Action 5.1.1: Encourage institutions to apply for NCAA grants, internships for minority/gender support.

Action 5.1.2: Encourage institutional/conference participation with the National Consortium of Academics and Sports (NCAS).

Strategy 5.2: Enhance commitment by presidents, athletics administrators, coaches, faculty athletic representatives and student-athletes to be advocates for establishing environments that foster diversity and inclusion.

Action 5.2.1: Monitor executive leadership in league (SAAC, Athletics Administrators, Presidents and Advisory Council) to ensure minority and gender representation/balance.

Strategy 5.3: Analyze and assess research and current programming to provide programs, tools and resources that support environments of diversity and inclusion.

Action 5.3.1: Create website resources, institutional and conference, to support diversity and inclusion.

Action 5.3.2: Conduct research to identify best practices in creating experiences that communicate the value of diversity.

Strategy 5.4: Create and facilitate tools that assist schools in recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse staff.

Action 5.4.1: Review conference policy on permissible social equity coaching positions; make adjustments if needed.

Action 5.4.2: Create a “best hiring practices” document for use by member schools.

Action 5.4.3: Maintain a professional development seminar for minority/female coaches.

Strategy 5.5: Provide tools and resources to schools that provide education on the importance, value, benefits and role of diversity and inclusion in higher education and intercollegiate athletics.

Action 5.5.1: Encourage participation in diversity workshops on member campuses.

Action 5.5.2: Develop methods of promoting racial/ethnic harmony themes by member institutions.

Strategy 5.6: Reaffirm the PSAC’s commitment to Gender Equity.

Action 5.6.1: Encourage participation in NCAA Diversity Training workshops by coaches, administrators and student-athletes.

Action 5.6.2: Develop Conference-wide methods to celebrate Diversity.

Action 5.6.3: Foster diversity on PSAC committees and in representation at SAAC meetings.

Action 5.6.4: Monitor female and minority representation on league committees, coaching staffs, administrators and student athletes.

### **Primary Measures for Goal Five**

- Number of PSAC coaches by gender and ethnicity
- Number of PSAC administrators by gender and ethnicity
- Number of PSAC student-athletes by gender and ethnicity
- Nominees and awardees for the Division II strategic alliance matching grant
- Number of schools requesting programming from the NCAA Diversity and Inclusion staff
- Gender and ethnicity representation on PSAC committees and representation on NCAA committees
- PSAC Gender Equity Reports
- Number of institutions with membership in NCAS

Approved by the PSAC Board of Directors, May 18, 2010.