



STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019

NORTH STAR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2013

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NORTH STAR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION – STRATEGIC PLAN

VISIONNSAA

Our intention is that intercollegiate athletics, among association members, be an integral part of the total educational experience and process. Through athletics, student-athletes experience and understand themselves, others, and the world in which they live. In the act of competition there is an emphasis on commitment, cooperation and team work, high achievement, and working toward a mutual goal. Member institutions, although varied and diverse, share a common commitment to principles, high standards of character development, moral integrity, and social values. The North Star Athletic Association encourages these principles, standards, and values.

The association and its member institutions are subject to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) rules and regulations. The welfare of the association, like that of the NAIA, is based upon the integrity of member institutions as defined in the champion of character program. The association embraces the concept of acting so as to bring about the greatest possible good to the association and considers related information and positions when making decisions that will impact either the association or its member institutions.

MISSION.....NSAA

The name of the organization shall be the “North Star Athletic Association” and sometimes hereafter referred to as Association, North Star, and NSAA. The association was incorporated in the state of North Dakota on the 4th day of September, 2013.

GUIDING VALUESNSAA

The purpose of the NSAA is to provide a forum in which member colleges may participate in intercollegiate athletics with institutions that share common goals for their athletic programs. The Association shall provide regulation, supervision, leadership, and promotion among and for its member institution’s intercollegiate athletic programs. Institutions electing to join the association share the belief that the athletic program of a member institution is an integral part of the total educational purpose of the institution. Such a program is the ultimate responsibility of the President at each member institution and must be subject to the control of the faculty and administration in each case. In addition, the NSAA seeks to be:

- Organization viewed as a strong conference with national prominence and significant national committee representation
- Spirited and healthy rivalries with a competitive balance between member institutions
- Sustainable and stable organization
- Quality student-athlete experiences with comprehensive opportunities

OBJECTIVESNSAA

- I. Student-Athlete:** Ensure, Promote and Sustain the Highest Quality Student-Athlete Experience
- II. Membership Integrity:** Promote Membership Expansion, Quality and Stability
- III. Competitive & Game Experience:** Create & Support Nationally Competitive Programs in Positive Environment
- IV. Governance:** Ensure intercollegiate athletics take place in a well-rounded athletic program with integrity, ethical behavior, sportsmanship and cooperative effort among member institutions
- V. Marketing and Communication:** Utilize Strategies to Maximize Exposure & Visibility of NSAA

PRIORITY 1STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

Ensure, Promote and Sustain the Highest Quality Student-Athlete Experience with an appropriate balance between academics and athletics with an emphasis on improving aspects of health, safety and well-being for all student athletes.

Priority 1.1

Strengthen the commitment to the recruitment and retention of academically successful student-athletes.

- Institutional Coaches – BOAD – (Ongoing)

Priority 1.2

Stress the importance of academic achievement, the pursuit of and desire for knowledge and progress toward graduation.

- Institutional Coaches – BOAD – FARs - (Ongoing)

Priority 1.3

Prioritize the minimizing of missed class time for student-athletes.

- Institutional Coaches – BOAD – FARs - (Ongoing)

Priority 1.4

Support the NAIA Champions of Character program and encourage participation in servant leadership development, career enhancement, and life skills programming for student-athletes.

- Institutional Coaches – BOAD – FARs – (Ongoing)

Priority 1.5

Develop and enhance student-athlete academic recognition programs.

- Commissioner – BOAD – FARs - (September 2013-Ongoing)

Priority 1.6

Monitor and promote fair and equitable treatment of student-athletes. Every member is committed to gender equity and Title IX compliance as mandated by Federal Law and the Office of Civil Rights

- Commissioner – BOP – BOAD – (Ongoing)

PRIORITY 2 MEMBERSHIP INTEGRITY

Promote Membership Expansion, Quality and Stability. Ensure consideration of the challenges and needs of current member institutions, continue to keep retention a high priority, consider an expansion plan to include new members per conference criteria while establishing geographic divisions within the conference.

Priority 2.1

Consider an expansion to include new members per conference criteria, allowing for the possibility of two automatic bids to national tournaments (10-12 member conferences).

- Commissioner – BOP – (January 2014)

Priority 2.2

Obtain commitment from all current member institutions – emphasis on the importance of retaining current conference members that support the philosophy of NAIA athletics.

- Commissioner – BOP – (January 2014)

Priority 2.3

Identify markets for future expansion.

- Commissioner – BOP – (February 2014)

Priority 2.4

Attract new member institutions that fit the expansion criteria of the North Star Athletic Association. In the context of expansion, policies will be developed that address travel time, cost, possible increased national tournament bids, and sports sponsored amongst the membership.

- Commissioner – (September 2014)

PRIORITY 3COMPETITIVE & GAME EXPERIENCE

Create & Support Nationally Competitive Programs in Positive Environment. Ensure member institutions are committed to create an expectation of high caliber programs and competitive game environments which operate under the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, ethics and personal behavior while embracing the NAIA Champions of Character initiatives.

Priority 3.1

Expect 100% of member institutions to field teams and student-athletes that regularly participate in post-season competition and expect representation of at least one male and one female North Star sport that competes in the final four of a NAIA National Championship.

- Institutional Coaches – BOAD – (May 2014)

Priority 3.2

Annually achieve a minimum of five male and five female student-athletes in the North Star who are identified as NAIA first team All-Americans.

- Institutional Coaches – BOAD – SIDs – (Ongoing)

Priority 3.3

Ensure a safe quality championship experience for all sponsored sports enhanced by on-site designated game management.

- BOAD – designated game management – SIDs – (Ongoing)

Priority 3.4

Promote the NAIA Champions of Character initiatives at Championship events.

- Commissioner – COP – BOAD – COC Liaisons (Ongoing)

Priority 3.5

Ensure that NSAA teams have competitive schedules that consider attendance, financial implications, and class time missed.

- Commissioner – COP – BOAD – COC Liaisons (Ongoing)

PRIORITY 4 GOVERNANCE

Ensure intercollegiate athletics take place in a well-rounded athletic program with integrity, ethical behavior, sportsmanship and cooperative effort among member institutions

Priority 4.1

Ensure appropriate institutional involvement from the President, Athletic Director, Faculty Athletic Representative, Coaches and Sport Information Directors in conference matters.

- Commissioner – BOAD - (July 2013)

Priority 4.2

Ensure involvement in expansion discussions among all Presidents and Athletic Directors.

- Commissioner – BOP – (July 2013)

Priority 4.3

Promote ethical conduct, rules adherence, and compliance with Title IX and NAIA rules and regulations.

- Commissioner – BOP – BOAD – (Ongoing)

Priority 4.4

Promote appropriate institutional involvement from the President, Athletic Director, Faculty Athletic Representative, Coaches and Sport Information Directors with the five core values of the NAIA Champions of Character Program; Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Sportsmanship and Servant Leadership.

- Commissioner – BOAD - (May 2014)

Priority 4.5

Ensure yearly reviews of Policies and Sport Procedures Manuals.

- Commissioner – NSAA Sports Information Director – (Ongoing)

Priority 4.6

Establish appropriate conference office personnel to support the Strategic Plan.

- Commissioner – BOP – (May 2014)

Priority 4.7

The BOP will review performance and expectations of the Commissioner on a yearly basis including the setting of goals for the coming year

- BOP – (May 2015)

PRIORITY 5MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Utilize strategies, tools and personnel to maximize exposure and visibility of the North Star Athletic Association and its member institutions on a regional and national platform.

Priority 5.1

Create and implement a comprehensive public relations and marketing plan that promotes championships and the academic and athletic success of member institutions. .

- Commissioner – NSAA SID’s – (May 2014)

Priority 5.2

Increase corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue to the conference.

- Commissioner – (September 2014)

Priority 5.3

Enhance the North Star Athletic Association website to ensure efficient and effective communication methods.

- Commissioner – NSAA SID – (September 2013)

Priority 5.4

Develop a “tag line” that encompasses the conference’s Vision, Mission and intent of the Strategic Plan.

- Commissioner – NSAA SID – (May 2015)

Priority 5.5

Establish the North Star Athletic Association as a regular host of NAIA National Tournament events to elevate the national presence of the conference.

- Commissioner – BOP – BOAD (May 2015)

Priority 5.6

Review yearly the effectiveness of marketing and media relations strategies that support “Brand Awareness” of the North Star Athletic Association and the NAIA within our footprint. Have readily available institutional merchandise available on the website.

- Commissioner – NSAA SID – (May 2015)

STRENGTHS:

- The geographic proximity of regional opponents within the North Star Athletic Association.
- A commissioner who provides continuity and the ability to plan strategically.
- Strong leadership via Presidents and Athletic Directors.
- Balance of long term coaches and less experienced coaches.
- An increasing strength nationally due to numerous appearances by member teams and NAIA championships;
- Similarity in member institutions, specifically in mission and enrollment.
- Competitiveness within the conference.
- Focused group about the importance in doing what is best for the league.

- We have a regional presence among our membership, and geography plays a positive role in attracting other schools in the region.

- Allows like institutions, from a regional area, with similar athletic competitive levels, the opportunity to compete in positive competitive format.

- Most of the teams have a history together and have been competitive with each other. Regional competition that doesn't require too much travel. Hopefully, the leadership is a strength - commitment by each institution to make our league work well and for the good of the league.

- Smaller sized institutions; proximity to each other; economics of the region; shared commitment between institutions to the NSAA; member of the NAIA

- Chance to be part of a new conference Automatic qualification - conference champion

- The value of a conference is the benefits the NSAA is bringing to our student athletes. As we grow we will need to ensure membership integrity and our core values.

- Member presidents talk to each other Common sense of values Core of quality ad's and coaches

- There is an opportunity to grow in size and stature if each campus would commit to providing the resources to improve programs

WEAKNESSES:

- Member institutions have varying philosophies concerning the role of athletics.
- Member institutions have varying reporting structures and athletic leadership roles.
- Disparity among institutions on the contribution of scholarships to attract top competitive athletes and teams.
- Low marketing emphasis by the North Star Athletic Association both regionally and nationally.
- Lack of North Star Athletic Association brand awareness among potential student athletes.
- Lack of NAIA brand awareness among potential student athletes

- While we want to do what is best for the league, we need to embrace what that might mean for each institution, and recognize the sacrifices others are making. We each need to be ready to step up when we can.
- We lack the number of schools to become a strong conference, and we do not cover enough sports for championship play.
- The distance could become a factor as we expand. If leadership is not committed to the league and puts its' programs ahead of the needs of the league, then we will become the DAC-10 again.
- Most programs are in the lower half of NAIA in competitiveness. NSAA is perceived to to be a weak conference in most sports. The foundation of the formation of the NSAA was proximity and cost (desire to reduce cost of athletic programs). We need a commitment to grow our programs in size and competitiveness
- Little name recognition, uncertainty of a new league, scarce resources for league
- NAIA membership - lack of notoriety; new league; lack of other FT positions in league office;
- Travel – distance, Media attention, Finding local colleges to join
- Still are in a growth mode, so ensuring we can grow the NSAA will help us be better in the future.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Institutions within the NSAA can be aligned with a conference that is well-respected.
- Institutions will be provided top competition among members.
- The BOP, Commissioner and BOAD can create a vision that may attract other institutions and provide continuous improvement and strength.
- With continued success and visibility, there are opportunities for corporate support and sponsorships that will provide financial gain for the conference.
- Strengthen the financial budget to market the NSAA regionally.
- We need to stay committed to thinking outside the box, as far as sports, recognition, JV leagues, north/south, east/west divisions.
- Sponsorships; common video streaming between institutions; league sports show
- Committed schools; Full time conference commissioner; Open to expansion - new ideas
- There are schools who may not be satisfied with their current affiliation who could be looking at our league as a viable alternative to what they are doing.
- Recruit more members; Keep the values; Commit to stay in it together for years to develop strength

THREATS:

- The real and/or perceived instability of the NAIA.
- Institutional decisions to change affiliations to the NCAA.
- Financial instability among member institutions.

- Lack of fan support and subsequent income for various sport championships.
- Lack of definition within institutions as to the value and role of athletics.
- Lack of commitment to new sports and to expanding the geographic reach of the conference for new members.
- The inability to expand will create situations where some sports will not have automatic bids to national competition. Those sports will be hurt significantly at each of the sponsoring institutions.
- Geographic isolation (lack of growth potential), small town's involved - limited sponsorship and notoriety, campuses may decide to go elsewhere
- Location - northern end of the US; lower population in region; presidential change can lead to changes in affiliation
- The threat is always there that one or more member will decide to go elsewhere, therefore, we need to be as strong as possible within our organization.
- We cannot afford to look like a league that is less than professional in how we operate and how we compete. It is important that all our programs represent quality, professionalism, and integrity if we are going to attract quality schools to join with us, and if we are going to reclaim the interest and support of boosters and alums.

Preliminary Analysis: Who are our customers?

- Prospective Student-Athletes
- Current Student-Athletes
- Non-Athlete Students
- Faculty/Staff
- Administration
- Alumni
- Our Communities
- Media
- Corporate Sponsors

Details of the Customer Profile for each Customer Base:

1. Prospective Student-Athletes and Current Student-Athletes
 - a. Scholarships
 - b. Facilities
 - c. Academic Options – Class times that don’t interfere with sports
 - d. Publicity
 - e. Leadership skills

2. Non-Athlete Students
 - a. Entertainment value
 - b. Convenient times for games
 - c. Affinity for teams and individual student-athletes
 - d. Giveaways at the games
 - e. Publicity
 - f. Involvement – a Stake in the Game

3. Faculty/Staff
 - a. Class Attendance
 - b. Class Participation
 - c. Focus on Academic Success
 - d. Athletics cannot be the “tail wagging the dog.”
 - e. Appreciation for the academic mission of the university

4. Administration
 - a. Athletics as the “front porch” of the university
 - b. A point of pride
 - c. Marketing capabilities for increased enrollment
 - d. Cost-Benefit Analysis:
 - i. Total tuition for all student-athletes – (scholarships + salaries and benefits of all coaches and staff, + maintenance and upkeep of facilities) = positive number

e. Maintain a clean image for the athletic department

5. Alumni

- a. Championships! Or at the least, pride in athletics
- b. Access to teams: coaches, student-athletes, AD's
- c. Information: pertinent and timely
- d. Will help support athletics if they know the purpose for their gifts
- e. Participation in the athletic vision

6. Communities

- a. Pride in athletics success
- b. Information: pertinent and timely
- c. Constant Contact: "What have you done for me lately?"
- d. Make them feel a part of the campus community
- e. Athletics must "give back" to the community (i.e. through the NAIA Champions of Character program)

7. Media

- a. SIDs build relationships with media
- b. Provide timely information
- c. Provide a comfortable and efficient work environment
- d. Go the extra mile to give them what they need
- e. Understanding that media projects your school's image more than anyone else can

8. Corporate Sponsors

- a. Offer value-added benefits
- b. Clearly state the value received from their sponsorship
- c. Help them to feel like "insiders"
- d. Follow up 100% on promised benefits