DEAR EAGLE NATION,

As we celebrate our fifth year of being a member of the Sun Belt, we can look back on our accomplishments with pride, yet knowing great things still lie ahead. This period of transition has been defined by our enhanced commitment to the well-being and academic achievement of our student-athletes. We continue to upgrade our facilities and support staffs to give our student-athletes every chance to succeed on and off the field, both while here at Georgia Southern and in life after sport. As we continue to strengthen the Eagle brand our mantra of “Rings, Diplomas & Leaders” remains the same.

The development of Let’s Fly, Georgia Southern University Strategic Plan 2018 highlights what we must do to achieve this vision. This plan includes guiding principles that will be used to move us forward in the coming years and enhance our profile regionally, in the conference as well as nationally. This document was created over an eight-month process with help from staff, student-athletes, fans and university administrators and has four strategic areas: Student-Athlete Experience, Revenue Generation, Brand Awareness and Talent Management. There are 20 specific goals with 34 objectives included in this plan.

Our time of transition as an athletic department is completed. This strategic plan is the roadmap designed for Georgia Southern athletics to grow and “FLY” into a position of leadership in the Sun Belt Conference.

I invite you to join me along with our coaches, student-athletes and staff as we continue on this exciting journey. Let’s Fly!

TOM KLEINLEIN
DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS
Georgia Southern Athletics is committed to the relentless pursuit of extraordinary accomplishments in academic achievement, athletic competition and the development of leaders.
CORE VALUES
Student-Athlete Experience Mission Statement:

We will provide a multidisciplinary approach to student-athlete development through a focus on life skills, academic success, championship performance, health and well-being and readiness for life after sports. Our goal is for student-athletes to leave our institution prepared to impact the communities they live in while having developed a positive, life-long relationship with Georgia Southern.

GOAL 1: Academic Achievement: Provide resources necessary to ensure student-athletes continue to achieve the 3.0 or higher department GPA.

OBJECTIVE A: Provide professional development opportunities to our current academic staff so they are educated in and begin to utilize the most current techniques and information to assist our student-athletes in their academic achievement.

OBJECTIVE B: Continue to build upon the joint efforts between coaching staffs and Student-Athlete Services to maintain or exceed our current department GPA of 3.0.

OBJECTIVE C: Collaborate with the University Counseling Center to enhance our current tutorial services program.

GOAL 2: Leadership/Life Skills Training: Provide a program that enhances a holistic student-athlete development through leadership and life skills.

OBJECTIVE A: Create a full-time position dedicated to developing and implementing a curriculum designed to teach leadership job readiness and social skill development in preparation for life beyond sport.

OBJECTIVE B: Increase the utilization of post-graduate scholarships through an awareness of opportunities that currently exist and the exploration of new scholarships within the NCAA, Sun Belt Conference and collegiate athletics.

OBJECTIVE C: Develop a specialized leadership program for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, incoming freshmen and other leaders within the student-athlete community.
GOAL 3: Physical/Mental Health Development: Maintain a high standard of care for the student-athletes’ physical and mental well-being.

OBJECTIVE A: Create a full-time position to oversee all aspects of student-athlete wellness and sport performance.

OBJECTIVE B: Replace current athletic training graduate assistant staff positions with five full-time athletic training positions.

OBJECTIVE C: Add the following positions to improve sport performance and student-athlete wellness: sport psychologist, nutritionist and female strength & conditioning coach.

OBJECTIVE D: Implement a system of national-best practices associated with student-athlete wellness.

GOAL 4: Sports Experience: Ensure coaches and staff are promoting the core values of the department while developing student-athletes in their quest to become champions.

OBJECTIVE A: Develop a system of identifying staff whom understand and embrace the core values of Georgia Southern University and its athletic department.

OBJECTIVE B: Establish a system of evaluating the desire of potential recruits to embrace Georgia Southern’s core values and winning tradition.

OBJECTIVE C: Continue to provide staffing and facilities that prepare our student-athletes to be champions.
REVENUE GENERATION

Revenue Generation Mission Statement:
Revenue Generation areas of the athletic department will strive to provide the resources necessary to achieve the vision of the athletic program at Georgia Southern University.

GOAL 1: Perform comprehensive review and data collection of all current revenue streams to improve experience and participation to guide decisions associated with future revenue opportunities.

OBJECTIVE A: Develop a comprehensive survey that solicits information from key stakeholders regarding athletic department revenue areas.

OBJECTIVE B: Formalize a revenue generation plan using information gathered through department surveys.

GOAL 2: Implement best practices based on data collected. This includes, but is not limited to, parking, concessions, areas of seating, suites and donor/fan experience.

GOAL 3: Structure staffing to promote revenue growth and improve fan/donor experience.

OBJECTIVE A: Hire a full-time staff member for the Athletic Foundation dedicated to the management of annual fund programming.

OBJECTIVE B: Establish a volunteer group to help expand the reach of our development staff through the cultivation of new donors for athletics.

OBJECTIVE C: Evaluate game-day responsibilities of development staff and implement a plan to better utilize their time interacting with fans and donors.
GOAL 4: Utilize a set of performance metrics for all development staff that promotes an increase in donor solicitation and gifts to athletics.

OBJECTIVE A: Report performance metric data to the department leadership and Athletic Foundation Board on a regular basis.

OBJECTIVE B: Develop and distribute publicly an annual report of athletic finances and athletic performance.

GOAL 5: Explore and develop plans to utilize Georgia Southern athletic facilities to generate revenue outside of traditional game days.

OBJECTIVE A: Expand marketing opportunities to involve new groups currently not utilized by Georgia Southern Sports Properties.

GOAL 6: Enhance all experiences associated with being a fan and donor of Georgia Southern across all sports to increase ticket revenue and private support.

OBJECTIVE A: Establish a system of game day promises that promote both customer service and enhanced game day experiences.

OBJECTIVE B: Implement a standard of external communication for all staff to be used with both donors and fans that are relational, not transactional.
BRAND AWARENESS AND IDENTITY

Brand Awareness Mission Statement:
We will strive to be a more visible athletics brand by strengthening the bonds with our communities through consistent branding strategies that instill pride in Georgia Southern, expand the brand, develop allegiance and increase the fan base known as Eagle Nation.

GOAL 1: Identify and define our current brand through research, surveys, focus groups and professional consultant groups.

OBJECTIVE A: Create a policy that promotes brand identity based on information received through strategic market research.

OBJECTIVE B: Implement a consistent external and internal branding strategy for the entire athletic department through the use of consistent fonts, colors and logos.

GOAL 2: Utilize strong branding that will increase engagement with our current fan base and create new fans of GS Athletics.

OBJECTIVE A: Develop relationships with merchants who are connected with our fans on local and regional levels to increase sales of merchandise and the promotion of our brand.

OBJECTIVE B: Promote businesses that are selling Georgia Southern merchandise through our social media platforms.

OBJECTIVE C: Provide data to merchants who are currently not selling Georgia Southern merchandise emphasizing the number of alumni living in their sales territory.
GOAL 3: Create collaborative partnerships with university and other external groups to expand branding opportunities.

OBJECTIVE A: Utilize co-branding opportunities to deliver University and athletic messaging.

OBJECTIVE B: Partner with local businesses to develop a co-branding platform that promotes their businesses and the GS brand.

GOAL 4: Develop and implement a major-market branding campaign (Atlanta, Macon, Savannah, Columbus, Augusta) that enhances new branding efforts.
TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent Management Mission Statement:
Georgia Southern Athletics is committed to recruiting, retaining and developing an inclusive and diverse staff to promote the overall goal of extraordinary accomplishments in athletic competition, academic achievement and the development of leaders.

GOAL 1: Implement a hiring process for all positions that ensures that candidates understand and fit the Georgia Southern and Statesboro culture while meeting the predetermined profile for the respective position.

OBJECTIVE A: Establish a “WE” culture where no task is too big or too small to be done by any employee.

GOAL 2: Evaluate the department organizational structure to ensure we are meeting current needs and fostering future growth.

GOAL 3: Activate a professional development platform that promotes retention and personal growth of all athletic department personnel.

OBJECTIVE A: Utilize travel opportunities to allow staff members to meet and learn from colleagues at other institutions and departments.

OBJECTIVE B: Collaborate with University constituents to develop a leadership program for athletics staff.
GOAL 4: Utilize a system of contracts for coaching staff that contain bonuses for academic and athletic performance.

GOAL 5: Develop and implement multi-year coaching contracts in all sports in order to retain coaches who have proven their value to GS Athletics.

GOAL 6: Create a system of additional benefits to be given to employees based on outstanding performances.

OBJECTIVE A: Continue to recognize employees at departmental meetings.
STEERING COMMITTEE
Tom Kleinlein, Director of Athletics
Dr. Chris Geyerman, Faculty Athletics Representative
Leonard Bevill • Kim Dean • Rodney Hennon • Walt Huggins • Anna Rose Moore • John Murphy • Sandra Worman

STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE
CHAIR
Reggie Simpkins, Senior Associate A.D., Student-Athlete Services
COMMITTEE
Brandy Clouse • Gleen Hart • Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

REVENUE GENERATION
CHAIR
Larry Mays, Senior Associate A.D., External Affairs
COMMITTEE
Leonard Bevill • Darron Burnette • Dan O’Dowd • Sally Scott

BRAND AWARENESS AND IDENTITY
CHAIR
Bryan Johnston, Associate A.D., Public Relations and Communications
COMMITTEE
Tracy Ham • Chad Jackson • Jan Southern • Stacy Sikes

TALENT MANAGEMENT
CHAIR
Lisa Sweany, Deputy A.D.
COMMITTEE
Dan Adams • Lauren Buck • Sarah Gidersleeve • Keith Roughton