

Norwich University Football Program Analysis

Submitted by:

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STATEMENT

This analysis has been prepared to discuss the apparent decline in competitiveness of the NU football program and identify actions that will benefit the overall football program while simultaneously enhancing student enrollment and retention. It is apparent to many former NU former football players that support for the program has lacked the focus once accorded that had placed it as a highly regarded New England small college competitor. Some might conclude that lacking a dedicated advocate force, the administration and trustees were not encouraged to maintain the program to its historical stature. I offer this analysis from a coach's perspective. The NU Football Team must dominate the top tier of other like programs within the NEWMAC. I cannot overemphasize the significance of identifying execution of the Norwich Football Program Improvement Initiative as a vital element of the Norwich University Strategic Plan. To do so will assure recognition that a winning football program is an existential entity within the institution and provides a major force to overcome unacceptable student retention issues.

STAFFING

The most significant problem with the current football program is the lack of **consistency within the coaching staff**. This means that our assistant coaches stay for only a year or two at the most. The reason? These coaches are paid so little that they cannot maintain a decent way of life on the little money they are paid. They have to leave this position in a year or two to make a living and if they are married, they have to leave to provide for their family. Currently our football staff consists of one head coach and three assistant fulltime coaches. Our head coach at NU currently has a salary of approximately \$70,000 and each assistant coach is paid \$26,000/year. Can anyone survive in VT on \$26K /year? If you are married how is this financially possible? For perspective, the Agency of Human Services in Waterbury, VT publishes the 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines at "Household of 3 \$24,820." Based on our research this salary is less than most, if not all, Division III schools in New England pay their assistant, fulltime football staff.

Consistency and success in the football program is made by NU making the commitment of at least \$50,000 to \$60,000 for each assistant coach and \$110,000 to \$125,000 for the head coach. We need to attract quality coaches that will stay with the program for more than 1-3 years.

This swinging door creates a great burden on the head coach, having to retrain and teach these new coaches not only the system that he uses, but how to coach each position. This takes important time away from the head coach's responsibility to present a competitive team and great experience for the players. Offenses and defenses of today are intricate, complex and require the head coach to know every position, how to block each assignment and how to read defenses. The head coach must know each position's assignments, techniques and schemes and all of this has to be taught to each player. We believe that our current coach has these qualities and is good for our program and the college.

The head coach must be constantly learning to be successful and he needs as much consistency in his staff as possible to be successful. He can't always be under the gun financially for his family, but needs to feel secure financially in order to coach affectively. If you want a quality coach to stay at NU and create a consistently winning program, NU must make the financial commitment to pay the going rate to all football coaches on our staff.

GRAD STUDENTS

During my Norwich playing career the football program had more than four grad students in the Physical Education, Administration of Physical Education - Master Degree program each year under Doctor Baines. The master's program was completed in "One Year," not two years, as I have been told that it is currently. When Doctor Baines retired, this master's program, along with a highly regarded Physical Education undergrad major went out the window. Why did this program stop? The program developed by Doctor Baines was greatly respected and produced many very successful PE grads. By losing the grad program, we lost the ability of this master's degree program to produce grad assistants to teach PE courses to undergrads and coach at least one sport. This saved the school a great deal financially having the grad assistants teach at NU. I understand that most of our master programs are on-line and that can present a problem with offering a Masters program on campus. If some one comes to NU for a Masters program in PE it would have to be on campus and should be offered with free tuition and some type of reasonable housing costs!

I have spoken with Amy Welch, the Department Head for the Health Sciences and Mathematics Department, and she is on-board with the possibility of creating a master's degree program in Administration of Physical Education.

When this program was in place in the 60's and 70's, we had grad assistants many who were recent NU and football team grads, who would be coaching the position they had played during their tenure at NU. This tremendously helped the quality of coaching our football players at that time and can again.

HOUSING

It has been brought to my attention by several people that there is little, if any, housing available close to Northfield. This creates another problem for graduate students and new coaches and their family, if they have one, if Norwich wants to recruit good, quality candidates to help coach while they are obtaining their Master's Degree. Norwich should seriously consider providing housing that is either free or very affordable for all graduate students, even if it means developing a complex for these graduate students or renovating a Class Club for the new coaching staff and/or grad students who coach. This would attract quality people who want a career in athletics, coaching or administration.

ENROLLMENT: WHAT WILL A SUCCESSFUL WINNING TEAM DO FOR NU

We have included in the initiative package, evidence of why a successful football program benefits and increases enrollment. Please read this evidence of what a successful football program has done for Division III colleges and will do for NU. A successful/winning program will bring more applicants to the college because of the media's reporting in the newspapers, radio and television throughout New England and the East every week throughout the fall and year. Every week the Boston Globe and other newspapers with a large circulation, report all divisional teams' results. This advertisement of NU's results will bring more student applications and will result in greater enrollment as evidenced by the new Division III colleges in the Northeast that have started a new football program. Their enrollment is up and the football programs are successfully recruiting student athletes who want to play football.

Every year at Alumni Weekend we are astonished by how giving our NU grads are in supporting NU. I have been told that NU alums donate approximately 12 million dollars each year at the Homecoming Football Game. To solidify the school's longevity and strength, we must be able to actively create more opportunities for its success by funding these programs that will continue to bring students to NU for a better education and experience. NU must make a five-year commitment to these goals financially.

RECRUITING

Norwich Football team recruitment of quality, skilled high school seniors is challenging perhaps because of the military component of our college. During the Vietnam era, Norwich recruited many outstanding athletes from the East coast very successfully and resulted in the college's best win/loss records. Recruiting good players and student athletes is one of the most important factors in developing a successful program. Many small colleges in New England and the Northeast are now turning to the development of an intercollegiate Division III football program. The development of a competitive football Division III program has been tremendously successful in increasing enrollment. A successful program will increase applications to the school because of the positive press in the papers and on television each week during the season.

Our current recruitment of high school athletes (from what I have researched) is comprised of the 3 assistant coaches going to different geographic areas and doing their

best to recruit athletes. Our head coach does not go on the road at this time and is at NU doing much online recruiting from different “transfer” apps that are being used at great lengths in recruiting good athletes who might want to transfer etc. The NU history of football recruiting was that all coaches would be assigned an area to recruit based on where they might have a history, contacts or where they grew up. The admissions department set up the schedule of schools to visit (typically 3/day). A report would be given to the Admissions Department as evidence of where they went and who they had spoken to. I was on that staff and we recruited successfully from the North and South shore of Boston, Western Mass, CT, VT, New York City, Long Island, Upstate NY, Maine and NH. That was with all four coaches on the road (the head coach would not go on the road for very long). The rest of the recruiting process was coming into the office in the evening and calling the recruits that they had seen on the road and looking and evaluating films of the recruits. We worked very closely with the Admissions Department.

EXPAND THE RECRUITING AREA

It is my view that recruiting must be **expanded** to other states to include NJ, Pennsylvania and the mid-South (VA, NC, and SC). NJ is a hotbed for football players. Having recruited this area for a Division I college, there are many outstanding football players in NJ that NU can recruit effectively. There are many outstanding players in NJ who may have fallen short of Division I status and are overlooked, but can play for NU.

The mid-South region welcomes the military! A little different, if not significantly different than the Northeast. There are military colleges here in VA, NC and SC area and they don't have a problem with recruiting. There are **many high schools** with a **Junior ROTC** program in the south! Does Norwich have a plan in place to recruit from these high schools? Has anyone from Norwich ever gone to these schools to recruit? I think it would be very wise to develop a plan within our Admissions Department to start this recruiting process in the mid-south. As I stated before, the perception of the military in the South is far different than the northeast. Here in the mid-south the military is revered and well respected. Shouldn't we recruit from this area now?

There are many alums that live in the South now having had enough of the winters in NE. They can assist in the recruiting of quality high school students and football players. I believe that the football alumni from NU would be willing to help in anyway they can to recruit from this area.

SUMMARY

The Norwich University Football program has been overlooked by the administration for many years! Currently, NU has very little invested in the program and by all indicators, the football program is **designed to fail** even with a very good head coach. **The failure to fund, to be proactive and forward thinking is evident in the team's inability to win games and successfully compete.** It is our hope that you can think outside the box and understand the importance of this issue. By funding this program NU will benefit most importantly with an increase in enrollment! It is our view that the Trustees and the Administration must implement this plan for success within the Strategic Plan immediately!