MEMORANDUM

TO: University Athletics Board (UAB)
FROM: Gender Equity and Diversity Subcommittee (GEDS)
SUBJECT: Recommendation on Varsity Sponsorship of Sand Volleyball
DATE: May 23, 2013

This memorandum outlines a recommendation and the pertinent background information for the UAB’s consideration of adding Sand Volleyball as a varsity-sponsored sport within Intercollegiate Athletics at the University of California, Berkeley.

The established protocol for adding a varsity sport to the roster of sports sponsored within Intercollegiate Athletics was approved by GEDS several years ago and is made available to club sports and other student groups interested in adding a varsity sport on the Cal campus. This protocol calls for consideration of a petition for varsity status to be heard by the campus GEDS for review against the established criteria. Once reviewed by GEDS against the criteria, a recommendation from GEDS to add a varsity support would then be forwarded to the UAB for consideration before being presented to the Chancellor for final review and approval.

Per this protocol, at its February meeting, the GEDS unanimously voted to recommend to the UAB, and subsequently the Chancellor, that Sand Volleyball be added as a varsity intercollegiate sport effective for the 2013-2014 academic year.

An overview of the pertinent issues surrounding this recommendation are outlined below for background during your consideration:

Criteria for Consideration – The process for considering sponsorship of a varsity sport calls for review of the petition against the following criteria:

- Sustainable interest in the sport
- Conference/national governing body oversight
- A pool of recruitable players
- Sufficient competition in Cal’s normal competitive region
- Available facilities

Basics of Sand Volleyball – The following is an overview of the basic details related to Sand Volleyball:

- **Competitive Season** – Sand Volleyball’s competitive season is generally March through April with the postseason usually starting the first week of May. The competitive season usually includes a minimum of eight (8) contests.
- **Minimum Roster** – The minimum roster of players for Sand Volleyball is twelve (12). The team format of Sand Volleyball calls for five (5) pairs of players.
Practice Times – The Sand Volleyball team would practice during the current time period (8:30-11:30 am) occupied by our indoor Women’s Volleyball team and would use the current slots for access to the weight room for strength and conditioning.

Facilities – A varsity Sand Volleyball program at Cal would utilize the existing sand volleyball courts on the Clark Kerr campus. This usage has been discussed and approved by Recreational Sports.

Title IX Implications - Intercollegiate Athletics at Cal meets its compliance obligations for Title IX by contending that we offer every team for the underrepresented gender for which there is sufficient interest, ability, and competition in the institution’s normal competitive region. It would be difficult to make the argument that Cal meets this obligation if we chose NOT to add Sand Volleyball. It is clear that there is interest on the part of our current student body in this sport, that they have the ability to compete at the Division I level, and that there are other programs within our competitive region to compete against. Therefore, adding Sand Volleyball strengthens and supports our current Title IX compliance position and shows a demonstrated history of program expansion for women.

Estimated Annual Budget/Financial Impact – The estimated annual cost for the 2013-2014 inaugural season for a varsity Sand Volleyball program would be approximately $10,000. This includes payroll, operating expenses, and financial aid.

It is projected that Sand Volleyball will become a Pac-12-sponsored sport with a Conference championship and ultimately an NCAA Championship within the next 2-3 years. In the event that the sport continues to grow to this level, it would require a more significant financial investment in the areas of scholarships, coaching, and travel to be in a position to compete at the highest level. At this time we do not know what the competitive landscape will look like in the future, making it difficult to estimate what this additional investment might be.

Once an NCAA Championship is established, if Cal were to sponsor Sand Volleyball at the varsity level, there would be revenue to offset the annual operating costs of approximately $50,000 annually from the NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Grant-in-Aid Funds.

In future years there may be a necessity to further upgrade the on-campus sand volleyball courts at Clark Kerr to allow for hosting more home events, which could potentially require an additional one-time investment of approximately $10,000.

Competition/Governing Body Oversight -

Sand Volleyball was officially designated an emerging sport within the NCAA in 2011. The NCAA requires 40 institutions to sponsor the sport for two (2) consecutive years in order to hold an NCAA Championship. Currently, there are approximately 30 institutions that sponsor the sport with another 30-plus considering adding the sport in 2013-2014 or in the near future. Thus, an NCAA Championship in the sport of Sand Volleyball is likely in the next 2-3 years.
As of the 2013-2014 season, there are seven (7) schools in Northern California that intend to form a Northern California consortium. This conference will guarantee and support competition opportunities among these programs. This consortium also intends to keep costs of adding Sand Volleyball to a minimum by providing competition that is easily accessible by van or bus. In addition to Cal, the schools currently committed to competing in the Northern California consortium are St. Mary’s, Stanford, Pacific, Sacramento State, Santa Clara, and San Francisco.

In addition to the seven (7) institutions that sponsor Sand Volleyball in Northern California, there are another twelve (12) schools in the western states of Arizona, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Idaho, Utah and Colorado that currently sponsor or are planning on adding the sport very soon. Many of these programs are Pac-12 Conference institutions, which will make it possible for a Pac-12 Championship to be held in the sport.

Additional Comments

The GEDS group had considerable discussion around the demographics of the current participants in college Sand Volleyball and the lack of diversity within the sport. Given our campus commitment to diversity (race and ethnicity, socioeconomic, etc.), GEDS encouraged Athletics to become a leader in promoting diversity in the sport of Sand Volleyball and proactively developing strategies to provide access and participation opportunities in the sport to the underrepresented groups in our community.

In addition, while GEDS is pleased that at least initially the incremental costs of adding Sand Volleyball as a varsity sport are minimal, they strongly encourage Athletics to develop a long–term investment plan for the sport. As the sport grows both on the west coast and nationally, the committee believes it will require a more substantial financial commitment to create a meaningful, robust experience that allows the sport to be successful and compete at the highest level.

Conclusion

Sand Volleyball is a rapidly emerging sport that continues to garner national and international interest bolstered by the powerful performances at the 2012 London Olympics. There is considerable interest by our current student body in participating in this sport and by prospective students considering attending Cal.

The GEDS requests the UAB’s support of this recommendation to provide additional participation opportunities for women on the Cal campus by adding Sand Volleyball as a varsity intercollegiate sport.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this recommendation.

TKG: tkg