

ECU Athletics Gender Equity Plan

East Carolina University is committed to gender equity in all aspects of the University and its athletics department. As we approach the 50th Anniversary of Title IX next summer, ECU embraces this opportunity to set forth a gender equity plan to ensure those ideals are followed and that ECU can maintain and improve its Title IX Athletics compliance. ECU has developed this Gender Equity Plan to demonstrate its commitment to its women's and men's teams and to provide equitable, championship-level experiences to its female and male student-athletes.

Background

ECU's athletics department currently sponsors 18 NCAA teams, including eleven women's teams and seven men's teams. ECU offers men's and women's basketball, golf, cross country, indoor track & field, and outdoor track & field, as well as football and baseball for male student-athletes and softball, soccer, lacrosse, volleyball, swimming & diving and tennis for female student-athletes.

Title IX is a gender equity statute that the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education ("OCR") enforces in regard to thirteen different athletics program areas. Those areas are: (1) Accommodation of Interests and Abilities, (2) Athletic Financial Assistance, (3) Equipment and Supplies, (4) Scheduling of Games and Practice Times, (5) Travel and Per Diem Allowances, (6) Opportunity to Receive Coaching, (7) Opportunity to Receive Academic Tutoring, (8) Locker Rooms, Practice and Competitive Facilities, (9) Medical and Training Facilities and Services, (10) Housing and Dining Facilities and Services, (11) Publicity, (12) Recruitment of Student-Athletes, and (13) Support Services. In regard to the equitable treatment areas, Title IX compliance is assessed on an aggregated basis across the opportunities and benefits ECU provides to its male and female student-athletes.

Methodology

In order to assess ECU's compliance with the above-referenced program areas, ECU collected information from student-athletes, coaches, athletics administrators, and others; reviewed and analyzed budgets, schedules, and other data and information; performed facility reviews; and took several other steps to evaluate compliance. ECU solicited and received input from student-athletes from each of its teams as well as all teams' head coaches. Further, ECU retained the legal services of Title IX expert Daniel A. Cohen and the law firm of Nelson Mullins to coordinate ECU's assessment on a legally-privileged basis. As a means of assessing compliance, ECU followed the Title IX implementing regulations, the Policy Interpretation on Intercollegiate Athletics, 44 Fed. Reg. 71,413 et seq. (Dec. 11, 1979) ("1979 Policy Interpretation"), legal precedent where applicable, and OCR practices. At the conclusion of the assessment, ECU produced its Gender Equity Plan, which appears towards the end of this document following a summary overview of ECU's Title IX assessment.

ECU's Gender Equity Plan sets forth terms for how ECU's Athletics Department intends to comply with Title IX between now and the conclusion of the 2023-2024 academic year. The University will continue to monitor and manage the plan on an ongoing basis to maintain and improve ECU's Title IX Athletics compliance. The University retains discretion to change any details of this plan in order to best achieve gender equity as the complicated world of intercollegiate and NCAA athletics continues to rapidly evolve.

Summary Overview of Title IX Assessment

(1) Accommodation of Students' Athletic Interests and Abilities

The Title IX regulations require schools to effectively accommodate the athletic interests and abilities of students of both genders so as to provide equal opportunity in the selection of sports and levels of competition available to them. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(1)).) Educational institutions have three alternative ways of demonstrating compliance with the equitable participation provision, commonly referred to as the "Three-Prong Test."

A school complies with Prong One if it provides athletics participation opportunities for female and male students in a ratio substantially proportionate to their full-time undergraduate enrollment ratio. With ECU's restoration of NCAA women's swimming & diving and women's tennis teams in 2021-2022, ECU's athletics participation gender ratio will approach ECU's full-time undergraduate enrollment ratio. As a result, adding additional NCAA men's teams will not be viable. ECU's undergraduate enrollment ratio continues to change on an annual basis. Thus, while ECU may strive to achieve Prong One compliance, ECU will not rely on Prong One compliance alone as part of its Gender Equity Plan.

A school complies with Prong Two if it has a history and a continuing practice of program expansion that is demonstrably responsive to the athletic interests and abilities of its historically-under-represented students. As noted above, ECU sponsors eleven women's teams and seven men's teams. With ECU's recent addition of an NCAA women's lacrosse team in 2017-2018, ECU's female participation grew to a record 293 opportunities. Prior to 2017-2018, ECU had never offered more than 280 female participation opportunities.

ECU currently complies with Prong Three. Under Prong Three, a school is considered in compliance unless a sport exists for the under-represented gender in which all three of the following conditions are met: (1) unmet student interest in a particular sport; (2) sufficient ability to sustain a team in that sport; and (3) a reasonable expectation of competition for a team in that sport.¹ Beach volleyball is the only NCAA women's sport in which ECU would have a reasonable expectation of sufficient NCAA competition if it were to start a team. Indeed, no other NCAA women's sport was offered by more than eight NCAA schools in ECU's normal competitive region as of July 2021 except for bowling, rowing, acrobatics and tumbling (A&T) and field hockey. Due to the lack of available competition, ECU could not be required under Prong Three to add any other NCAA women's sport.

¹ See April 20, 2010 OCR Policy Clarification at 4.

In order to assess whether unmet student interest may exist in any particular NCAA women's sport, ECU cast a wide net: it evaluated the possible existence of requests by students and admitted students that a particular sport be added as well as requests that an existing club sport be elevated to intercollegiate team status; it measured student participation in intramural and club sports; it conducted approximately 80 interviews with students, coaches, administrators and others regarding potential interest in new NCAA sports; it conducted a student athletics interest survey that generated responses from over 1,000 undergraduate students; and it gauged through its admissions office whether female high school students had expressed interest in any NCAA sport that ECU does not already offer. No information under those myriad efforts suggested that unmet NCAA-level interest exists among ECU's female students and admitted students. Indeed, the only notable sign of student interest *at any level* in NCAA women's sports that ECU does not already offer involves the relative popularity of *intramural* beach volleyball. ECU will continue to offer beach volleyball at the intramural level. Those intramural participants, however, have not shown interest in forming a competitive club team even though club sports are almost entirely driven by student demand. Additionally, none of the other factors suggest that unmet student interest exists in those sports; for example, athletics administrators, coaches, students and the admissions office are not aware of NCAA-level interest in those sports, and ECU's female students themselves did not indicate unmet interest in NCAA opportunities via ECU's fall 2021 student athletics interest survey.

As part of this assessment, ECU also assessed off-campus interest in potential new NCAA women's sports. While female students at other colleges play NCAA sports that ECU does not offer, it is significant that the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) does not offer a championship in any women's sport that ECU does not offer at the NCAA level. Considering that approximately 90% of ECU's students come from North Carolina, the lack of available high school recruits for any new women's sport is significant.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU currently complies with the first Title IX program area. ECU will continue to diligently assess its Prong One and Prong Three compliance on an annual basis.

(2) Athletic Financial Assistance

“[Institutions] must provide reasonable opportunities for [awards of athletics financial assistance] for members of each sex in proportion to the number of students of each sex participating in ... intercollegiate athletics.” This provision is “primarily” determined “by means of a financial comparison to determine whether proportionately equal amounts of financial assistance (scholarship aid) are available to men's and women's athletic programs” in the aggregate. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,415 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.37(c)).)

With the restoration of ECU's women's swimming & diving and women's tennis teams in 2021-2022, ECU is expected to comply with Title IX's scholarship provisions this year. For summer 2021, ECU also made summer aid equitably available under a gender-neutral policy.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU currently complies with the second Title IX program area. ECU will continue to monitor its compliance on an annual basis.

Equitable Treatment Analysis

The remaining Title IX program areas are subject to an aggregated analysis across all men's teams and all women's teams. OCR assesses compliance with the equitable treatment program areas by comparing the availability, quality and kinds of benefits, opportunities, and treatment provided to members of both sexes. "Institutions will be in compliance if the compared program components are equivalent, that is, equal or equal in effect. Under this standard, identical benefits, opportunities, or treatment are not required, provided the overall effects of any differences [are] negligible. If comparisons of program components reveal that treatment, benefits, or opportunities are not equivalent in kind, quality or availability, a finding of compliance may still be justified if the differences are the result of nondiscriminatory factors. ... If sport-specific needs are met equivalently in both men's and women's programs, however, differences in particular program components will be found to be justifiable." (Id. at 71,415-16.)

In regard to equitable treatment, "Title IX requires a systemic, substantial disparity that amounts to a denial of equal [athletic] opportunity before finding a violation of the statute." Parker v. Franklin County [Ind.] Community School Corp., 667 F.3d 910, 922 (7th Cir. 2012); see also id. at 919 (citing to 44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417). "Under the emphasized language's unambiguous text, in evaluating a program's distribution of treatment and benefits, a court may find a program-wide violation (global) when 'substantial and unjustified' disparities exist. The text also allows a court to find a violation where disparities in 'individual segments of the program' (i.e., a specific [equitable treatment program area]) 'are substantial enough in and of themselves' to deny 'equality of athletic opportunities.'" Portz v. St. Cloud State Univ., 16 F.4th 577, 581 (8th Cir. 2021) (citing 1979 Policy Interpretation). "Unequal aggregate expenditures for members of each sex or unequal expenditures for male and female teams ... will not constitute noncompliance with this section, but [OCR] may consider the failure to provide necessary funds for teams for one sex in assessing equality of opportunity for members of each sex." 34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c).

(3) Equipment and Supplies

Compliance with this program area is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of athletic equipment and supplies in regard to their quality, amount, suitability, maintenance and replacement, and availability. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(2)).)

ECU has a department-wide equipment contract with Adidas for all teams, and ECU's male and female student-athletes generally received apparel of comparable quality under that contract. In regard to the amount of equipment and supplies, ECU's obligation is to equitably meet the sport-specific needs of its men's and women's teams, which can vary substantially across sports. Teams expressed different opinions about the quantity and quality of their equipment and supplies, but in the aggregate there are not material Title IX issues; almost all student-athletes want more gear. ECU generally took steps to mitigate any notable issue that

arose, and ECU recently increased Adidas allotments for its women's sport programs. In regard to the suitability and maintenance / replacement factors, there were not material Title IX issues between the equipment and supplies for ECU's men's and women's programs. In regard to availability, ECU identified that increased equipment storage was needed at the multi-purpose practice turf field utilized by women's soccer, women's lacrosse and other programs for strength and conditioning; ECU purchased a storage unit for women's soccer and women's lacrosse that ECU expects to be installed in approximately January 2022.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will improve the availability of equipment and supplies for the women's soccer and lacrosse teams at the multi-purpose practice turf field by installing a storage shed primarily for their use in approximately January 2022. ECU's athletics administrators will continue their oversight to monitor teams' equipment and apparel purchases to improve consistency, and ECU will consider increasing select budget items on an as-needed basis. ECU will continue to monitor the components of the equipment and supplies program area and address issues as they may arise.

(4) Scheduling of Games and Practice Times

Compliance with this program area is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of: (1) the time of day competitive events are scheduled, (2) the time of day practice opportunities are scheduled, (3) the number and length of practice opportunities, (4) the number of competitive events per sport, and (5) the opportunities to engage in available pre-season and post-season competition. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(3)).)

In regard to competitive events, all ECU teams schedule the maximum number of competitive events permitted under NCAA rules, or close to the maximum, except for the men's and women's track & field teams that compete together. There are not material Title IX issues with respect to the times of competitive events or opportunities to engage in available pre-season and post-season competition. There are also not material Title IX issues with respect to practice opportunities. Scheduling issues occasionally arose at shared practice facilities, but nondiscriminatory factors justified the solutions reached (e.g., priority given to the in-season team or the team with greater logistical challenges). ECU will continue to explore ways to maximize the efficient use of shared practice facilities, including lighted areas if needed to extend practice hours, through coordination and oversight of scheduling.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will continue to explore ways to maximize the efficient use of shared practice facilities, including lighted areas if needed to extend practice hours, through coordination and oversight of scheduling. ECU will continue to monitor and address issues under this program area as they may arise.

(5) Travel and Per Diem Allowances

Compliance with this program area is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of: (1) modes of transportation, (2) length of stay before and after competitive events, (3) housing furnished during travel, (4) per diem allowances, and (5) dining arrangements. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(4)).)

There are not material Title IX issues in the aggregate with respect to men's and women's teams' modes of transportation, lengths of stay, housing furnished during travel, or per diem allowances. Certain teams ate more on the road. Most teams desired larger travel budgets, but all teams received adequate and necessary funds to cover their travel needs. Generally, spending differences between individual teams were found to be justified to meet teams' unique needs, were based on legitimate differences including accommodating different travel squad sizes, and/or otherwise did not create material Title IX issues in the aggregate. ECU's athletics administrators will continue their oversight to monitor teams' travel expenditures to improve consistency, and ECU will increase travel budgets on an as-needed basis. Maintenance of ECU's transportation pool vehicles are addressed regularly and are not influenced by the gender of the teams that may use ECU's fleet.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will continue to monitor and address issues under this program area as they may arise, and ECU will increase travel budgets on an as-needed basis.

(6) Opportunity to Receive Coaching

In regard to the opportunity to receive coaching (34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(5)), compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the relative availability of full-time coaches, part-time and assistant coaches, and graduate assistants. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(5)).) In regard to the assignment of coaches (34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(6)), compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men's and women's coaches of their training, experience, other professional qualifications and professional standing. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(6)).) Further, compliance is assessed in regard to the assignment of coaches by examining the compensation of coaches. (*Id.*) In general, a violation of 34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(6) "will be found only where compensation or assignment policies or practices deny male and female athletes coaching of equivalent quality, nature, or availability." (*Id.*)

In regard to the opportunity to receive coaching, ECU provides equal opportunities for its men's and women's teams to receive coaching. Every ECU team has the maximum number of coaches permitted by NCAA rules, and all coaches are full-time employees. No issues related to coaches' availability were raised by student-athletes. (See below regarding support staff.) In regard to the assignment of coaches, there are not material Title IX issues. All of ECU's coaches are qualified for their positions, with requisite training and experience. Many of them – for men's and women's teams – have significant accomplishments to their credit. There is no issue with compensation of coaches that could be said to deny male or female student-athletes access to coaching of equivalent quality, nature, or availability.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will continue to monitor and address issues under this program area as they may arise.

(7) Opportunity to Receive Academic Tutoring

In regard to the opportunity to receive academic tutoring (34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(5)), compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of the availability of tutoring and procedures and criteria for obtaining tutorial assistance. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(5).) In regard to the assignment of tutors (34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(6)), compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men's and women's tutors of tutor qualifications, training, experience, compensation and other factors. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,416-17 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(6).)

ECU offers academic support and benefits to all student-athletes. Tutors are assigned based on subject matters, not the gender of the requesting student-athletes; they are equitably available to male and female student-athletes pursuant to the same assignment procedures. There are not material issues related to disparate tutor qualifications or other factors; again, the same tutors are available to male and female student-athletes. Overall, there are not material disparities in the academic services ECU offers to male and female student-athletes.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will continue to monitor and address issues under this program area as they may arise.

(8) Locker Rooms, Practice and Competitive Facilities

Compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of: (1) quality and availability of the facilities provided for practice and competitive events, (2) exclusivity of use of facilities provided for practice and competitive events, (3) maintenance of practice and competitive facilities, (4) preparation of facilities for practice and competitive events, (5) availability of locker rooms, and (6) quality of locker rooms. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(7)).)

ECU has several impressive athletic facilities, many with recent improvements, and ECU's upcoming facility plans are exciting. For example, women's basketball and volleyball received locker room renovations and office updates recently. ECU just installed new graphics packages in fall 2021 for many teams' locker room areas, including volleyball, women's lacrosse, women's soccer, cross country/track & field, women's basketball and softball, as well as the TEAMS building and Minges Coliseum where many of ECU's men's and women's teams utilize team spaces. A new graphics package was also installed at the softball team's indoor hitting facility, and a new sound system was added there in fall 2021. With the return of ECU's women's tennis and swimming & diving teams in fall 2021, the tennis team received a newly renovated locker room, featuring new lockers, renovated flooring, bathroom and shower

upgrades, painting and branding/graphics, a TV capable of integration for training uses, and secure card-reader access. The swimming & diving locker room will receive a complete renovation beginning in spring 2022. The natatorium also received fresh painting and graphics in summer 2021, and ECU installed new records boards reflecting the team's championships. The tennis facility will have wind screens and benches installed for the upcoming spring 2022 season.

In the aggregate across all ECU's men's and women's teams' competitive and practice facilities, there are not substantial Title IX issues in regard to quality or availability / exclusivity. As noted above, ECU will continue to explore ways to maximize the efficient use of shared practice facilities, including lighted areas if needed to extend practice hours, through coordination and oversight of scheduling. Facility maintenance issues generally are addressed as they arise, and there are not material Title IX issues with respect to ECU's competitive and practice facilities' maintenance and preparation. ECU will continue to monitor its facilities and address potential issues brought to the attention of athletics administrators, including at campus spaces that are not controlled by athletics.

In regard to ECU's locker rooms, swimming & diving will be completely renovated beginning in spring of 2022 to provide a new, exclusive locker room. ECU will hire an architect firm to conduct a study of the athletics footprint and options for expanding team spaces and other possible projects to improve student-athlete experiences.

Gender Equity Plan:

As noted above, ECU will completely renovate the swimming & diving locker room and install wind screens and benches at the tennis facility in spring of 2022.

ECU will continue to monitor and address facilities issues that may arise, including assessing and as needed continuing to update locker rooms and other team spaces, as well as graphics packages. ECU has formed a space committee to assess spaces within the athletics footprint for possible office reallocations and relocations as ECU adds athletics staff. (E.g., see below regarding additional support staff.) ECU will also hire an architect firm to conduct a study of the athletics footprint and options for expanding team spaces and other possible projects to improve student-athlete experiences.

(9) Medical and Training Facilities and Services

Compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of: (1) health, accident and injury insurance coverage, (2) availability of medical personnel and assistance, (3) availability and qualifications of athletic trainers, and (4) availability and quality of weight, training and conditioning facilities. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(8)).)

ECU's insurance coverage is the same for all teams. There are not material Title IX issues related to the availability of medical personnel and assistance. There are also not material Title IX issues in the aggregate related to the availability and qualifications of athletic trainers

assigned to ECU's men's and women's teams, but trainer assignments are assessed by athletics administrators and ECU will revisit such assignments to ensure trainers are equitably assigned to sport programs based on health and safety factors, sports' seasons and time demands. ECU has multiple athletic training rooms for teams' use; there are some differences in quality particularly for the smaller auxiliary training rooms, but the main training rooms are available for use by all student-athletes as needed.

Currently, ECU has only one weight and conditioning facility in the Murphy Center for all teams' use. ECU has kept the facility well-maintained and updated, given its heavy usage, including new flooring, new dumbbells, new weight racks, new benches, new conditioning turf, and new cardio equipment. ECU also updated its branding/graphics, added office space for ECU's strength staff, and increased the fueling station size for ECU's men's and women's teams' benefit. ECU's men's and women's teams have equitable access to the weight room, taking into account legitimate logistical issues and sport-specific needs. Construction plans have been completed and funding has been secured for a second ECU weight room. Construction is scheduled to begin on the second weight room in spring 2022, pending potential supply chain issues (ECU is currently waiting on steel and other supplies). The new weight room will benefit all teams by providing expanded access for everyone across the athletics campus. Strength coaches are equitably available in the aggregate to ECU's men's and women's teams; athletics administrators re-communicated this semester ECU's expectations for strength coaches that work with multiple programs to provide equitable coverage based on health and safety factors and sport-specific needs. ECU will continue to monitor access to strength and conditioning coaches who are shared between sport programs.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will construct a new, second weight room beginning in spring 2022. ECU will continue to monitor and address issues that may arise under this program area, including ensuring that athletic trainers are equitably assigned to sport programs based on health and safety factors, sports' seasons and time demands, and continuing to monitor access to strength and conditioning coaches who are shared between sport programs.

(10) Housing and Dining Facilities and Services

Compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of housing provided and special services as part of housing arrangements (e.g., laundry facilities, parking space, maid service). (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(9)).)

ECU does not provide preferential housing for male or female student-athletes. Lack of ECU-provided food and fueling station options and locations were consistently cited by student-athletes. ECU hired the Department's first registered dietitian in 2019 to serve all ECU teams, but that employee left ECU in fall semester of 2021 and ECU is now in the process of recruiting to fill the position. Different teams utilize different food options, including all head-count sports having access to a limited training table option during the academic year (these student-athletes pay for access to the training table out of their scholarships or out-of-pocket).

Gender Equity Plan:

Once a new registered dietitian is hired, ECU will better monitor individual teams' nutrition needs as part of an aggregated analysis, and ECU will evaluate potential fueling station options in the TEAMS building and within the new weight room being constructed in spring 2022. ECU's athletics administrators will continue to oversee teams' provision of food options based on sport-specific needs, and ECU will consider increasing budget items on an as-needed basis.

(11) Publicity

Compliance is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence for men and women of: (1) availability and quality of sports information personnel, (2) access to other publicity resources for men's and women's programs, and (3) quantity and quality of publications and other promotional devices featuring men's and women's programs. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417 (citing to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)(10)).)

Sports information and creative content personnel support all ECU teams and provide publicity resources, publications and other promotional devices for all men's and women's programs. Teams expressed different opinions about the quantity and quality of their coverage, but no team expressed satisfaction with their coverage. Women's basketball seemed to have the best quality social media coverage; it is primarily run by the support staff of that program, but that remains ECU-provided publicity under Title IX. ECU will review and assess its media relations/creative content departments to utilize personnel for all sports' social media platforms and otherwise explore improvements for all teams' publicity, but there is not a substantial Title IX disparity in this area.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will review and assess its media relations/creative content departments to utilize personnel for all sports' social media platforms and otherwise explore improvements for all teams' publicity. It will also explore rebranding of its radio shows. ECU will continue to monitor and address issues under this program area as they may arise.

(12) Recruitment of Student-Athletes

Compliance is assessed by examining (1) whether coaches or other professional athletic personnel in the programs serving male and female athletes are provided with substantially equal opportunities to recruit, (2) whether the financial and other resources made available for recruitment in male and female athletic programs are equivalently adequate to meet the needs of each program, and (3) whether the differences in benefits, opportunities, and treatment afforded prospective student athletes of each sex have a disproportionately limiting effect upon the recruitment of students of either sex. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417 (citing generally to 45 C.F.R. § 86.41(c)).)

ECU’s men’s and women’s teams are provided comparable opportunities to recruit, and each coaching staff is permitted to make its own budgetary choices about the financial resources to utilize from its team budget to meet that year’s recruiting needs. Certain teams choose to spend more on recruiting to meet team needs, to address different squad sizes, to account for annual fluctuations in their need for first-year students, and for other reasons. ECU’s athletics administrators will continue their oversight to monitor teams’ recruiting expenditures for equity, and ECU will consider increasing budgets for recruiting purposes on an as-needed basis. In the aggregate, there are not material Title IX disparities in the benefits, opportunities, and treatment afforded to prospective student-athletes for ECU’s men’s and women’s teams.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU’s athletics administrators will continue their oversight to monitor teams’ recruiting expenditures for equity, and ECU will consider increasing budgets for recruiting purposes on an as-needed basis. ECU will continue to monitor this program area and address issues as they may arise.

(13) Support Services

Compliance in this area is assessed by examining, among other factors, the equivalence of (1) the amount of administrative assistance provided to men’s and women’s programs and (2) the amount of secretarial and clerical assistance provided to men’s and women’s programs. (44 Fed. Reg. at 71,417.)

By July 1, 2022, ECU will have added support positions (director of operations positions) for its women’s volleyball, women’s lacrosse and women’s soccer teams. (Volleyball has already been added.) At that point, ECU’s men’s and women’s programs will have comparable support services in the aggregate when taking into account sport-specific needs.

Gender Equity Plan:

ECU will add director of operations positions for its women’s lacrosse and soccer teams by July 1, 2022. ECU will continue to monitor this program area and address issues as they may arise.

Gender Equity Plan

ECU’s Gender Equity Plan is set forth on the following pages:

Program Areas (Title IX)	Recent Developments & Improvements	Future Plans
(1) Accommodation of Interests and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of women’s tennis and women’s swimming & diving teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to diligently assess Prong One and Prong Three compliance on an annual basis.

(2) Athletic Financial Assistance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor compliance on an annual basis.
(3) Equipment and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased and will install storage unit for lacrosse/soccer at the turf field (pending potential supply chain issues); anticipated delivery January 22, 2022. • Increased Adidas budgets for: women’s soccer, softball, volleyball, women’s golf, and track & field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic administrative oversight – use of budgets. • Consider increasing select budget items on an as-needed basis. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(4) Scheduling of games and practice times		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize athletic footprint/usage of multiple athletic fields through scheduling to allow sport programs opportunity to use lighted areas if needed. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(5) Travel and per diem allowances		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic administrative oversight – use of budgets. • Consider increasing select budget items on an as-needed basis. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(6) Opportunity to Receive Coaching		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(7) Opportunity to Receive Academic Tutoring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.

<p>(8) Locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent renovation of Tennis locker room. • Swimming & Diving locker room – full renovation scheduled, spring 2022. • Painting and graphics added to natatorium summer 2021. • WBB & VB had locker room renovations and office updates recently. • Added graphics packages to locker room areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volleyball ○ Women’s Lacrosse ○ Women’s Soccer ○ Women’s Track & Field/XC ○ Women’s Basketball ○ Softball ○ TEAMS building hallways • Softball indoor hitting facility: new graphics package installed, and new sound system added in fall 2021. • Minges Coliseum Updates completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Renovated flooring on concourses ○ New graphics/branding ○ Updated lighting ○ Updated sound system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming & Diving locker room – full renovation build to start in spring 2022. • Space committee review project re: athletics footprint to address TEAMS office space for addition of ops positions and for possible reallocations and relocations. • Tennis spring 2022 – addition of wind screens and installation of benches. • ECU to hire architect firm to conduct study/assessment of athletics footprint and options for TEAMS building and other possible projects to improve student-athlete experiences. • Continue to assess and as needed update graphics packages. • Continue to assess and as needed update locker rooms and other team spaces. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
<p>(9) Medical and training facilities and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of second weight room building (waiting on steel/supplies); construction to begin in spring 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure trainers are equitably assigned to sport programs based on health and safety factors, sport season and time demands.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicated expectations of strength coaches working with multiple programs. • Currently in hiring process to fill two vacant ATC positions. • Murphy Center Weight Room renovation completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor access to strength & conditioning coaches shared between sport programs. • Construction plans are completed for second weight room & funding is secured; scheduled to begin construction in spring 2022 (pending potential supply chain issues). • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(10) Housing and dining facilities and services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue evaluation of fueling station options in both TEAMS building and within new weight room in spring 2022. • Continue to monitor individual teams’ nutrition needs as part of an aggregated analysis. • Athletic administrative oversight and consider increasing budget items on an as-needed basis. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(11) Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible rebrand for radio show. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore rebranding of radio shows. • Review and assess media relations/creative content departments to utilize personnel for all sports social media platforms. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(12) Recruitment of student-athletes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic administrative oversight – use of budgets.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider increasing select budget items on an as-needed basis. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.
(13) Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations position added for volleyball. • Lacrosse and Soccer searching, respectively, for candidates for new operations positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations positions will be added by July 1, 2022. • Continue to monitor and address issues that may arise.