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UTSA OFFICIALS RECEIVE ATHLETICS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Officials will review study and assess interest level of UTSA and community

(San Antonio)—Officials at The University of Texas at San Antonio today received a final report from a national consulting firm retained to determine the feasibility of eventually adding NCAA Division I football to the UTSA sports program.

Before taking a position, UTSA plans to spend the next several months reviewing the study with representatives of the university and the local community. The report does not make a final recommendation about adding football.

“The report is only the first step in gathering information concerning costs and infrastructure, but now it is time for us to meet with students, faculty, staff and the community before making a decision in the best interest of UTSA,” said UTSA President Ricardo Romo. “For UTSA to consider adding football, this study makes it clear that doing so requires careful planning and an evaluation of available resources.”

To add football, the feasibility study outlines infrastructure that must be in place, such as additional scholarships, staff and athletics facilities. Additionally, a number of NCAA legislative issues would have to be addressed and Title IX requirements fulfilled by the university to move from Division I-AAA to either I-AA or I-A.

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UTSA ATHLETICS STUDY

Add one of two

Since neither tuition nor state appropriations can be used to support the athletics program, the feasibility study encourages the university to evaluate student interest in approving additional fees to support athletics. Not including start-up expenses, a Division I-A football program could cost up to \$8 million per year to support.

Administrators also will meet with a number of constituent groups to evaluate external community support, both public and private, for expanded athletics programs – particularly football.

Carr Sports Associates of Gainesville, Fla., prepared the feasibility study. UTSA coaches and athletics staff members worked with the firm to review existing athletics department operations and resources required to advance to higher levels of NCAA competition. The firm also interviewed community leaders, including members of the UTSA Development Board.

The full athletics feasibility report will be posted at 1 p.m. Nov. 29 at www.utsa.edu/ucomm/athletics.

With 16 sports, UTSA recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of its athletics program, which is a member of the Southland Conference.

“We are making great strides in athletics at UTSA,” said Athletic Director Lynn Hickey. “I want to thank the UTSA Athletics Council and the individuals and groups who funded this feasibility study. I believe all of us are looking forward to taking the next steps in developing a blueprint for the future of the Division I program at UTSA.”

The University of Texas at San Antonio is the premier institution of higher education in South Texas and one of the fastest growing universities in the state. Celebrating its 37th year, UTSA serves more than 28,000 students enrolled in 62 undergraduate, 43 master’s and 19 doctoral programs. The second-largest institution in the University of Texas System, UTSA is committed to research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public service.

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UTSA ATHLETICS STUDY

Add two of two

BACKGROUND: UTSA ATHLETICS FEASIBILITY STUDY

The study, conducted by Carr Sports Associates, specifically looked at costs and programmatic implications for the university and the greater San Antonio community if UTSA were to consider fielding a football program. A group of alumni and community members contributed \$50,000 to UTSA to finance the feasibility study, which was sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs. The report does not make a final recommendation about adding football. UTSA's athletics program recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, and, since the program was created, there has been support among a number of students, alumni and community members for UTSA to include football as part of its Division I program.

For UTSA to advance from Division I-AAA membership in the NCAA to Division I-AA and eventually to Division I-A, the study makes clear that substantial support both within the university and in the general community are required. Costs for a program would need to be covered by new private/public support and student fees, because tuition and appropriations cannot be used to support athletics. The study delineates NCAA membership requirements, gender issues related to Title IX legislation and facilities requirements for expanded athletics offerings. The study also assumes the Alamodome would be available for competition if UTSA opted to have a team.

Annual costs to support coaches, staff, administrators, travel and scholarships for football players are estimated to be between \$1.5 million and \$4 million for a Division I-AA team and \$4 million and \$8 million for a Division I-A football program. The study outlines how UTSA could field a Division I-AA football team within three years after administrative approval, with the first two years designated as prep years and the third year as a practice year. Start-up costs for the initial year, excluding facilities, would be \$3 million, with incremental increases in subsequent years.

Based on the study's "expedited" timeline for implementing football and assuming resources for such a program become available, the earliest that UTSA could field a Division I-A football team would be eight years from the initiation of the program. To move the existing 16 sports, along with football, to the Division I-A level requires additional funding of between \$12 million and \$20 million to cover revenue requirements during the first eight years of the program.

To accommodate existing sports and recreation programs at the university, UTSA's facilities need both improvement and expansion according to the feasibility study. The study also indicates the need for building a \$60 million community recreation facility, which could be used to provide practice and play areas for UTSA's current athletics program.

For UTSA to consider adding football, the study makes it clear that doing so requires careful planning and evaluation of available resources. Before taking a position, UTSA administrators plan to spend the next few months reviewing the study with representatives of the university and the local community to gauge support for expanded facilities and student willingness to pay increased fees to support a football team. The university also will use this time to evaluate potential public and private sources of new funding that may exist to support the expansion of the athletics program at UTSA.