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**Thomas Boeh, Athletic Director**  
**California State University, Fresno**  
**5241 N. Maple Avenue**  
**Fresno, CA 93710**

**July 15, 2006**

**Dear Dr. Welty and Mr. Boeh**

Recently, Mr. Boeh announced to the Fresno community that the University would discontinue the men's wrestling program and reinstate the men's cross country program. This decision came as a major surprise. The members of the Central Valley Wrestling Association have closely examined the reasons given by both Mr. Boeh and Dr. Welty. The following excerpt is from the University's athletic webpage.

### **June 15, 2006**

**FRESNO, Calif.-** Fresno State Athletics Director [Thomas Boeh](#) announced today that effective July 1, 2006, the university will discontinue the intercollegiate wrestling program and reinstate the men's cross country program.

The action is taken as a cost-reduction measure and a significant component of a long-range strategic plan for Fresno State athletics, Boeh said.

"Fresno State is committed to success within the Western Athletic Conference as well as the provision of the very best student-athlete experience possible for all our sponsored programs, Boeh said.

"There is strong desire on the part of the university and its constituents to have Fresno State advance to a level of national prominence and compete consistently among the nation's best. Unfortunately, the rapidly rising costs associated with an NCAA Division I-A athletics program have caused many institutions around the country with similar aspirations to re-evaluate their sports programming. Here at Fresno State, we found our department in the same position," said Boeh.

In 2005-06, the average NCAA Division I-A athletics department budget was \$32.3 million, compared to Fresno State's \$22 million.

"Given today's industry standards, it is very clear that to remain a sustainable I-A program we need to find more efficiencies," Boeh said. "This adjustment will enable us to direct an adequate amount of resources, in the form of money, facilities, support services and staff, toward the support and advancement of all of our student-athletes."

Scholarship offers to returning student-athletes and incoming freshmen who have signed letters of intent will be honored until they have completed four years of school at Fresno State or transfer to other institutions. Affected student-athletes will continue to have full use of training and academic facilities and may compete individually if they choose.

The contract for head wrestling coach [Shawn Charles](#) will be honored until June 30, 2007. He will be reassigned within the Department of Athletics in the coming academic year.

The announced change means the restoration of men's cross country after a three-year absence from Fresno State. This action is intended to help advance the men's track and field program, which has been operating at a significant disadvantage since the discontinuance of men's cross country in fall 2003. Boeh said the program will greatly help the men's track and field program return to conference championship level. The men's cross country program will require no additional scholarships and will carry a roster of 10-12 student-athletes.

Boeh said among the considerations that led to the decision to discontinue wrestling were:

- An anticipated net annual financial savings of \$350,000-\$400,000 (not likely to be fully realized until 2008), which will help the long-term financial stability of the athletics program.
- Wrestling is not a sponsored sport with the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) and is not a broad-based NCAA championship sport.
- The lack of a dedicated wrestling practice facility, locker room and cost-efficient and reasonable competitive venue.
- Wrestling carries a roster of approximately 34 student-athletes and does not have a comparative women's program.
- The recent low level of academic achievement by the wrestling program's student athletes.

## **Background Fact Sheet**

### **1. In the interest of achieving annual financial stability of the athletics program**

There will be a net annual financial savings to the program of between \$350,000 and \$400,000. However, these savings will not likely be fully realized until the 2007-08 academic year. .

**2. Wrestling is not a sponsored sport within the Western Athletic Conference**

The WAC does not sponsor wrestling and points toward the conference all-sports competition are not available.

Fresno State's wrestling program, following its departure from the PAC 10, it has been competing as an independent. The team was scheduled to join the newly formed Western Wrestling Conference (WWC) in the fall of 2006. It is a conference where the membership is spread out over seven states and three time zones. This dynamic would likely to have significantly increased wrestling travel costs.

Western Wrestling Conference: Air Force Academy, North Dakota State, Northern Colorado, Northern Iowa, South Dakota State, Utah Valley State, Wyoming

**3. The absence of a dedicated wrestling practice facility and locker room**

**4. The absence of a cost-effective venue for competition**

**5. The recent history of academic achievement within the wrestling program**

The program has most recently scored an NCAA APR rate of 871. This is well below the acceptable rating of 925 and ranks the team in the lowest 10% among Division I wrestling programs.

The team has an aggregate GPA of 2.44. This represents the lowest team GPA in the athletics department by a large margin and .45 below the average student-athlete average of 2.89.

**6. Wrestling is not a broad-based NCAA championship sport**

As of September 1, 2005, there were 87 NCAA Division I wrestling programs. This represents roughly 27% of the NCAA Division I membership. On the same date there were 303 NCAA Division I men's cross country programs.

**FRESNO STATE, CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL SPORTS PROGRAMMING**

Sport	WAC	NCAA
Baseball	7*	286
Basketball	9	326
<i>Cross Country</i>	8	303
Football	9	235
Golf	9	289
Tennis	7	264
Track and Field (O)	5	263
<i>Wrestling</i>	2	87

\* indicates one affiliate member

With the programming adjustment, the average numbers of NCAA participating institutions reflected in the seven sports that Fresno State will continue to sponsor in the fall of 2006 is 281.

Fresno State will continue to sponsor seven men's sports in the 2006-07.

**7. Wrestling carries a significant roster and scholarship level. It also does not have a like women's program**

Wrestling carries 9.9 equivalency full scholarships and a roster of 35 student-athletes. Continued sponsorship of the sport would impede compliance with Title IX and CALNOW student-athlete participation levels and distribution of athletics aid. These challenges have become considerably greater in recent years. Currently the student body ratio at Fresno State is 60/40 in favor of women, and the trend is expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

Further, because wrestling does not have a like women's program it is less efficient regarding the use of resources and facilities. Finally, the sponsorship of a uniquely men's sport also makes it more difficult to make the appropriate comparisons among men's and women's sport programs OCR's "13-point laundry list."

**FRESNO STATE 2005-06 MEN'S SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP LEVELS AND LIKE SPORTS STATUS**

Sport	NCAA Maximum	Like Sport
Baseball	11.7	Yes
Basketball	13*	Yes
<i>Cross Country</i>	---	<i>Yes</i>
Football	85*	No
Golf	4.5	Yes
Tennis	4.5	Yes

Track and Field	12.6	Yes
Wrestling	9.9	No

The reinstated men's cross country program will carry a roster of 10-12 individuals and, per NCAA rule; the scholarship distribution will be absorbed into the men's track and field allotment. The net result is an improvement in the participation and scholarship ratio between men and women student-athletes at Fresno State.

It is important to note that although the department's mission to achieve compliance with Title IX standards was not a primary driving force behind the decision to discontinue the wrestling program and reinstate men's cross country; this adjustment will indeed result in a positive effect on the department's gender equity.

**8. Reinstatement of men's cross country**

The reinstatement of men's cross country is expected to cost less than \$25,000 annually, which will be recovered via the NCAA sport sponsorship distribution, Subsequently, any additional cost for the program will be negligible.

# **REBUTTAL FACT SHEET**

## **Central Valley Wrestling Association Response:**

### **1. In the interest of achieving annual financial stability of the athletics program**

The CSU Fresno Athletics Department has grossly overstated the annual financial savings of \$350,000 to \$400,000 by eliminating the wrestling program. Actual budgetary expenditures for the wrestling program in the past five years were as follows:

Academic year 2002-2003	\$253,212
Academic year 2003-2004	\$264,901
Academic year 2004-2005	\$290,687
Academic year 2005-2006	\$291,270

The athletics budget at CSU Fresno has increased \$4.5 million in the last 4 years. The wrestling budget is less than 1.4% of the \$22 million budget.

### **2. Wrestling is not a sponsored sport within the Western Athletic Conference**

While the Western Athletic Conference does not administer a conference championship in wrestling, Fresno State wrestlers have received WAC recognition for their academic and athletic achievements. In 2006 four wrestlers earned WAC Scholar-Athlete Awards. Fresno State wrestling alumnus Stephen Abas was recognized by the WAC in 2004 as a member of the "WAC Athletes at the Olympics".

Fresno State Wrestling is a founding member of the Western Wrestling Conference (WWC). Conference members include Air Force Academy, University of Northern Iowa, University of Wyoming, University of Northern Colorado, South Dakota State University, North Dakota State University, and Utah Valley State University. This conference allows Fresno State wrestler's to garner conference, regional, and national recognition for their academic and athletic achievements.

However, unlike the WAC which spans five different time zones, the Western Wrestling Conference is nearly half the total distance needed for travel for conference competition. There is **no** significant increase in cost to the wrestling budget as a member of the Western Wrestling Conference.

Lastly, Boise State, who sponsors Div.1 wrestling, won the WAC Commissioner's **cup with 6 million dollars less in budgetary resources.**

### **3. The absence of a dedicated wrestling practice facility and locker room**

Since its inception in 1961, Fresno State Wrestling has practiced and competed almost exclusively in the North Gym on the campus of CSU Fresno. In 2004 the wrestling practice room received a \$50,000 renovation that was funded by a large contingent of local wrestling supporters. The result is a top-notch practice facility for Fresno State Wrestling as well as improved accommodations for the CSU Fresno Physical Education and Kinesiology programs. The wrestling room in the North Gym is used exclusively by the wrestling team from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. daily, and from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. for the Bulldog Wrestling Academy.

### **4. The absence of a cost-effective venue for competition**

For the past 46 years, the wrestling team has competed in the North Gym. This facility is extremely cost effective and user friendly. In 1995 the North Gym received a \$2 million facelift that enabled significant improvements to be made, including the addition of chair-back seats, making this a comfortable venue and offering the opportunity to generate additional income through the sale of seat options.

Additionally, the Fresno State Wrestling team has held one competition per year in the SaveMart Center. This has been an exciting and great event for the Central Valley wrestling community and Fresno State supporters. In 2004 the west coast attendance record for a single wrestling match was broken when over 9,000 fans watched the Bulldogs wrestle Iowa State University. This match currently represents the third highest paid attendance sports event of all sports at Fresno State, only to fall behind the football and men's basketball team, which are highly marketed.

The following is an illustration of ticket revenue and expenses for home wrestling matches for the past three years.

2002/2003	Expense: \$6,356	Ticket revenue: \$9,250
2003/2004	Expense: \$7,701	Ticket revenue: \$32,143
2004/2005	Expense: \$17,961	Ticket revenue: \$43,033

### **5. The recent history of academic achievement within the wrestling program**

It has been stated that the NCAA APR rate for the wrestling program is 871, which is below the desired APR rate of 925 of other Division 1 programs. Men's basketball has an APR rate of 864; men's tennis has an APR rate of 887 followed by women's softball at an APR rate of 905.

The current wrestling coaching staff at Fresno State has shown marked improvement in the area of academic achievement in less than a single year. Through a rigid plan of improving academic expectation

the wrestling team's APR rate is expected to improve by more than 20 points. The team's GPA for the Spring 2006 semester was over a 2.7, a tremendous improvement from the 2.4 cited by the Administration.

Fresno State Wrestling's 2006 recruiting class boasted an average 3.1 GPA and is among the highest academic achieving recruiting classes for all sports at Fresno State. The current coaching staff has demonstrated a commitment to high academic standards, one that was sure to improve Fresno State Athletics.

#### **6. Wrestling is not a broad-based NCAA championship sport**

The CSU Fresno Administration has stated that there are only 87 NCAA Division I wrestling programs. In 2006 there will be 4 additional wrestling programs bringing the total number of participating institutions to 91. Currently there are only 117 universities that sponsor Division 1A football programs. Furthermore, the addition of wrestling programs is a growing trend throughout the country, as 39 programs have been added since 1999.

In the State of California, there are 23,318 high school participants in the sport of wrestling and 728 high schools teams. In the CIF Central Section, more than 65 of the 92 high schools have wrestling teams. The CIF Central Section has won the most state championships and the local Clovis School District has won 12 team state championships since 1972, the most of any school district in the state. CSU Fresno, by having an intercollegiate wrestling program, will continue to work to serve the needs and values of the Central Valley as well as the State of California.

#### **7. Wrestling carries a significant roster and scholarship level. It also does not have a like women's program**

There aren't any Title IX guidelines or policies that require "like sports" for men and women. In fact, Title IX allows the same men's and women's sports to be treated differently as long as the percentage of men and women receiving any benefit in the "13 point laundry list" is equitable.

In a July 11, 2003 letter to colleges and universities, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has stated "...OCR hereby clarifies that nothing in Title IX requires the cutting or reduction of teams in order to demonstrate compliance with Title IX, and that cutting or elimination of teams is a disfavored practice." OCR continued "Therefore, in negotiating compliance agreements, OCR's policy will be to seek remedies that do not involve the elimination of teams".

Fresno State did not negotiate with OCR in 2003 prior to eliminating men's soccer or in 2006 prior to dropping wrestling.

#### **8. Reinstatement of men's cross country**

Cutting the Fresno State wrestling team will improve the ratio of participation between men and women. It will not, however, offer any more opportunities for women in college sports. The net result is lost opportunity for 23-25 student athletes (35 wrestlers vs. 10-12 cross country runners) and NO ADDITIONAL opportunities for women.

### **Additional Fact Sheet**

#### **A1. Continuing Success - Representing the Valley at a National and World Level**

- 11 Conference Champions
- 14 Top 25 NCAA Finishes
- 33 All-Americans
- 7 NCAA National Champions
- 1 Olympic Silver Medalist

#### **A2. Broad Based Popularity of Wrestling.**

The sport of wrestling is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest by participation in the United States according to a 2004-2005 Survey by the National Federation of State High School Associations.<sup>1</sup>

SPORT	PARTICIPATION
1. Football	1,045,494
2. Basketball	545,497
3. Track & Field	516,703
4. Baseball	459,717
5. Soccer	354,587
<b>6. Wrestling</b>	<b>243,009</b>
7. Cross Country	201,719
8. Golf	161,025
9. Tennis	148,530
10. Swimming & Diving	103,754

<sup>1</sup> "2004-2005 Athletics Participation Survey" National Federation of State High School Associations

Additionally only five NCAA Championship sports, out of more than forty, generate revenue from their championship. Within those 5 sports, wrestling boasts the 4th largest revenue. The attendance annually is among the highest compared to other NCAA Championship events. Based on an economic impact survey conducted at the 2000 event, the Championships attract 15,000 visitors to the host city, account for 12,000 hotel room nights and generate an estimated \$10 million in economic impact.<sup>2</sup>

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
2001	80,727
2002	76,843
2003	91,734
2004	87,676
2005	95,459

### **A3. Minority Participation**

Fresno State wrestling boasts one of the best opportunities for minority athletes. Over the last 5 years, the team is made up of 58% minority athletes. With the absence of wrestling and soccer, the most popular minority sports, the University would be denying the advancement of young minority men who can make a positive impact on their community.

### **A4. Central Valley Participation**

Fresno State wrestling shows some of the highest contribution from Central Valley resident athletes. Being a local California State University school, Fresno State wrestling gives back taxpayer's money to residents of the Valley for their children to earn money toward a college degree. Over the past 5 years, the Bulldog wrestling team has consisted of 73% Central Valley athletes and continues to recruit heavily in the local area where wrestling is strong and proud.

### **A5. Diverse Opportunities**

Fresno State wrestling gives a diverse range of opportunities due to the "weight-class" system. Athletes ranging in size from 125lbs to 285lbs have an opportunity to compete athletically at the collegiate level. Wrestling builds character and is unique among sports because it welcomes all athletes tall and short, heavy and light, physically strong and physically fittest. Wrestling is blind to color, socio-economic status and geography.

### **A6. Future Community Leaders, Educators, and Coaches**

Athletic programs, especially of the non-revenue variety, are primarily responsible for providing educators, coaches, and future community leaders in the Central Valley. By cutting these programs, we are denying our future societal leaders the chance to attend school and make a difference in the area. Long term, we will lose the eventual benefit that they will bestow upon the community.

### **A7. Miscellaneous**

In addition there are 14 Division 1 schools in the Mountain and Pacific Time Zones including 6 universities in California that compete in Division 1 Wrestling (Cal Poly, CSU Bakersfield, CSU Fullerton, UC Davis, Stanford and Fresno State). These local Div. 1 programs allow the wrestling budget to be highly cost efficient.

There are 8 universities in the Western States that compete in Division 1 wrestling, to include: Arizona State, Boise State (WAC member), Oregon, Oregon State, Portland State, Air Force Academy, Utah Valley State, and Wyoming.

Was Mr. Tom Boeh persuaded by personal interest knowing that he was a former cross country runner at his alma mater where he has received numerous awards?

What other alternatives did the Administration at CSU Fresno consider before taking this drastic step that has impacted so many current and future student athletes?

Why wasn't the Athletic Corporation involved in the decision?

Sincerely,

**Central Valley Wrestling Association**

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<sup>2</sup> The St. Louis Sports Commission