

## COVID-19 updates

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## Frequently asked questions

Posted May 14, 2020

### **What changes are being made?**

The University's Department of Athletics will discontinue three intercollegiate athletics programs at the end of the 2019-20 academic year as part of its planned \$4.4 million expenditure reductions for the upcoming fiscal year. The affected programs include men's cross country, men's golf and women's tennis. As part of its plan to reduce the Athletics budget in keeping with the financial realities the University is facing, additional components, including salary reductions for select coaches and administrators, staff position eliminations, and scholarship and operating reductions will yield the target financial savings.

### **Why is this being done?**

The action is being taken as part of the University's overall budget restructuring efforts due to the financial realities the University is facing. The University asked Athletics to develop a plan to significantly reduce the University's financial support to the Athletics department and that recommendation does so by approximately 23 percent (\$4.4 million) for fiscal year 2021 and beyond.

### **Why is this being done now?**

There is never an ideal time to make an announcement like this. However, the decision was made to do so in early May to allow the student-athletes as much time as possible to find new schools at which they can continue in their sport, if they choose to do so. This also allows the affected coaches time to find new positions.

### **How did UA choose which sports would be eliminated?**

The University considered many factors, including: University and community impacts, relative cost, athletic facilities, and a comparison of sports sponsored by Mid-American Conference (MAC) schools.

### **How many student-athletes and coaches are affected?**

With the elimination of these three sports, we anticipate that 32 student-athletes (23 males and 9 females), three coaches and one graduate assistant coach will be affected. Of the student athletes, five are currently seniors who will have

exhausted their eligibility during the 2019-20 academic year, and two were unable to complete their senior year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and may seek to compete another year at a different institution if they so choose.

**Will the University assist current and incoming student-athletes who wish to pursue opportunities at other schools?**

Yes. All affected student-athletes have been provided with permission to contact any other institutions for purposes of transfer. Coaches and staff will support these individuals through the transition process. Also, the University will void all National Letters of Intent (NLI) for individuals who had planned to come to The University of Akron and participate in any of the sports being discontinued, so that they may pursue other intercollegiate athletic opportunities.

**Will student-athlete scholarships continue to be provided?**

Unfortunately, the current financial situation does not allow the University to be able to continue to offer and provide athletics scholarships to current student athletes in the sports of men's cross country, men's golf and women's tennis moving forward. However, the University is required to provide the agreed upon scholarship to the incoming student athletes that had previously signed an offer for the upcoming year should they matriculate to The University of Akron.

**What other support is the University providing to affected student-athletes?**

Members of the athletics administration are available to discuss scholarship and transfer information as well as provide academic advisement. UA Senior Associate Athletic Director Mary Lu Gribshaw (men's cross country and women's tennis) and Associate Athletic Director Paul Hammond (men's golf) are available to set up meetings by calling 330-972-6689. For student-athletes who need additional support, the sports psychology staff will be made available by calling 330-972-8349.

**Is the University considering the discontinuation of other sports programs?**

At this time, the University is not considering the discontinuation of other sports programs.

Donors are encouraged to provide scholarship and other support through the University's [Department of Advancement](#) and the UA Foundation.

**Will the University remain in the MAC?**

Yes, the University is committed to its membership in the MAC and is pleased to be a member of an outstanding conference where our sports and talented student-athletes have the opportunity to compete at the highest levels with neighboring institutions.

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