



Athletics Board Report  
Spring Committee Meetings  
April 22, 2022

*Respectfully submitted by: Mrs. Tonia Walker, Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics*

*The Athletics program at Bluefield College offers 20 varsity intercollegiate sports and one junior varsity sport with nearly 300 participants, comprising approximately 75% of the student enrollment. The program administers 350 athletics contests (approximately 150 home events) held each year.*

*Bluefield College is a special place with a rich history, and we are working diligently at building an incredible story that will leave a legacy of greatness! The Division of Athletics operates on the principles of The Four Pillars and include 1) Academic Excellence 2) Athletics Success 3) Community Engagement and 4) Division Infrastructure. The pillars provide a roadmap for the success of the student-athlete experience with the goal of graduating. The theme for the year is "More than an Athlete," as it is our goal to embrace a holistic approach in the development of the student-athlete and build champions in the classroom, on the field of play, and in the community.*

### **Highlights**

- The Cheer team traveled to compete in the National Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship in Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida in January 2022.
- Women's Volleyball finished the season with the best record in recent history, 20-12 overall and 15-5 in the AAC. They went on to play in the AAC volleyball tournament as the 4th seed and unfortunately lost their first match against Brenau University.
- Luke Young is Bluefield University's first AAC wrestling champion. Young captured the title in the 184-pound weight class at the Appalachian Athletic Conference Championships. With the victory Young qualified for the NAIA National Championships in Wichita, Kansas, March 5-6.
- Men's Volleyball has tied the most wins in a season over the history of the sport at BU. They have defeated two NCAA Division II opponents this season, also a first in the history of the program. The team finished the regular season 15-18 and will enter the Mid-South tournament on March 31<sup>st</sup> as the 9<sup>th</sup> seed.
- Head Men's Volleyball Coach, Alfonso Alvarez, is the winningest coach in team history with a 3-year overall record of 26-49.
- BU started the baseball season with a 15-0 record and currently possesses a 20-6 (overall) 10-6 (conference) record and is ranked #22 in the NAIA's top 25 Poll for the first time in school history.

- Three football student-athletes were invited to participate in the NFL Pro Day at Bethel University: Antonio Strickland, Charles Turner-Cox, and DeMarcus Wimbush.
- Steve Lily was hired as the Head Men’s Golf Coach. He is an accomplished amateur golfer over his lifetime playing in numerous high schools, collegiate, state, regional, and national competitions. Steve is a promoter of junior golf in the region and has served as a long-term board member of the Blue Ridge Junior Golf Tour. Steve holds several golf coaching certifications and is the founder of his own golf instruction business, Steve Lilly Golf LTP, LLC, which is based at Fincastle Golf Club in Bluefield, Virginia. Steve is recruiting to launch a Women’s Golf program, as well.
- Louis Belt was hired as the Head Men’s and Tennis Coach. Louis is the former Head Men’s and Women’s Tennis Coach at Bluefield State College. He led the men’s tennis team to 10 consecutive appearances in the NCAA Division II national tournament.

**Key Performance Indicators for Athletics**

Student-athlete enrollment (SPRING)	292
Student-athletes on scholarship (SPRING)	274
Student-Athlete Retention Rate	90%
Student-Athlete Discount Rate (SPRING)	Athletic Disc Rate: 30.59% for all student-athletics
	Institutional Disc Rate: 61.13% for at all student-athletes

**Division of Athletics’ One Year Anniversary of Men’s Basketball Team Kneeling**

One year following the men’s basketball team’s kneeling, the University continues to promote social justice and diversity and inclusion awareness opportunities through the Office for Belonging. On Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Bluefield University hosted Dr. Derek Greenfield, an internationally recognized speaker, thought leader, and educator. Dr. Greenfield facilitated engaging sessions on inclusive excellence for the BU campus community. Group sessions were held for the Executive Leadership Team, a general session for faculty, staff, and students, and an evening session for BU athletes.

The thought provoking and interactive sessions focused on expanding the knowledge of cultural issues and strategies in an increasingly diverse global world. He challenged us as individuals and as an institution to adopt policies and practices that appreciate the power of culture in building relationships and maximizing human potential.

In recognition of the 1-year milestone of the team’s kneeling, the University produced a video featuring President Olive, VP Tonia Walker and Sherelle Morgan, Director for Belonging. The video captured the many efforts of the institution to address social justice awareness, opportunities for change, and solidarity for the campus community.

Additionally, The NAIA is using the Bluefield University Men’s Basketball Team kneeling story as an example of a pathway for change for other college campuses. President Olive and VP Walker

will be featured in one of the general sessions during the 2022 NAIA Convention on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The session is entitled: The Bluefield Story: Sports as a Vehicle for Change.

## **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

### **Historical Overview of Cumulative Grade Point Average Fall 2019 – Fall 2021**

<b>Historical Overall GPA</b>	
Fall 2019	2.74
Spring 2020	3.02
Fall 2020	2.97
Spring 2021	2.94
Fall 2021	2.99

The cumulative departmental GPA (average of all student-athlete's GPAs) increased from 2.94 (SPRING 2021) to a 2.99 (FALL 2021).

### **Fall 2021 GPA Semester Breakdown**

Below is a breakdown respective to each sport with Dean's and President's honors, as well as the sport breakdown of Cumulative GPA.

- 13 sports programs currently carry GPAs above 3.0
- 32 student athletes were named to the Presidents list (GPA between 3.9 and 4.0)
- 51 student athletes were named to the Dean's list (GPA between 3.5 and 3.8)

<b>Team</b>	<b>Term GPA</b>	<b>Overall GPA</b>
BASES	3.02	2.91
BASKB	2.49	2.78
BASKW	2.93	3.3
CHEER	2.84	3.26
CRSCM	3.35	3.5
CRSCW	3.09	3.39
FOOTB	2.07	2.44
GOLF	2.86	3.11
SINFO	2.38	3.41
SOCCR	2.93	3.15
SOCCW	3.25	3.37
SOFT	3.01	3.22
TENNS	2.63	2.71
TENNW	3.01	3.18
TRACK	2.45	2.77
TRAKW	2.66	3.09
VOLLW	3.31	3.42
VOLLY	3.19	3.17
WREST	2.32	2.99

<b>Dean's and President's List</b>	
<b>Dean's List</b>	<b>51</b>
BASES	4
BASKW	5
CHEER	2
CRSCM	1
CRSCW	2
FOOTB	4
GOLF	1
SINFO	1
SOCCR	8
SOCCW	6
SOFT	2
TENNW	2
TRACK	1
TRAKW	2
VOLLW	4
VOLLY	3
WREST	3
<b>President's List</b>	<b>32</b>
BASES	2
BASKB	1
BASKW	3
CHEER	1
CRSCM	2
FOOTB	2
GOLF	1
SOCCR	2
SOCCW	6
SOFT	1
TENNW	1
TRACK	2
VOLLW	3
VOLLY	2
WREST	3

Student-athletes will continue to meet and surpass the goal to attain a collective 3.0 cumulative GPA. Continued collaboration with the ACE Center will assist us to provide the support necessary to sustain this level of accomplishment. Additional efforts that have been implemented to drive academic success include:

- Early identification of all at-risk student-athletes are required to enroll in Academic Seminar classes, have scheduled tutoring and mandatory academic coaching.
- The iPad initiative has been of great benefit for student-athletes as they travel for competition and allowed them the opportunity to participate in classes, complete

assignments, and take tests while away from class. Added support of internet access for busses and vans is forthcoming.

- Group tutoring opportunities for specific classes are now offered and are great additional support for student-athletes.

## **ATHLETIC SUCCESS**

### **Student-Athlete Success – 2021-22 Fall and Spring Sports (to date) 2021-22 Student Athlete Accomplishments**

#### **Football**

Josh Nelson

- MSC Appalachian Division Offensive Player of the Week – Sept. 13
- MSC Champions of Character Team

Nathan Herstich

- MSC Appalachian Division Offensive Player of the Week – Oct. 18, Oct. 25
- NAIA Offensive Player of the Week, Oct. 25
- MSC Appalachian Division First Team
- Virginia Sports Information Directors College Division Offensive Rookie of the Year
- Virginia Sports Information Directors All-State First Team College Division

DaMarcus Wimbush

- MSC Appalachian Division Defensive Player of the Week – Oct. 18, Nov. 15
- MSC Appalachian Division First Team
- Virginia Sports Information Directors All-State Second Team College Division

Joey Dales

- MSC Appalachian Division Special Teams Player of the Week – Oct. 18, Oct. 25, Nov. 1, Nov. 15
- NAIA Special Teams Player of the Week – Nov. 1
- MSC Appalachian Division First Team

Antonio Strickland

- MSC Appalachian Division First Team
- Virginia Sports Information Directors All-State Second Team College Division

Matthew Trevillian

- MSC Appalachian Division First Team

Tanner Griffith

- MSC Appalachian Division First Team

Termaine Baker

- MSC Appalachian Division First Team
- Virginia Sports Information Directors All-State Second Team College Division

Jaquan Ebron

- MSC Appalachian Division Player of the Year
- MSC Appalachian Division First Team

- Lanier Award Finalist (Best College Division Player in Virginia)
- Touchdown Club of Richmond Offensive End of the Year
- NAIA All-American First Team
- Virginia Sports Information Directors All-State First Team College Division

Lebron Fields

- MSC Offensive Player of the Week, Nov. 15

MSC All-Academic Team – Ben Meade, Joe Haner, Sam Kirtley

### **Women's Volleyball**

Leslie Flores

- AAC Player of the Year
- AAC First Team
- AAC All-Academic
- NAIA AVCA All-Region – Northeast Region
- NAIA All-America Honorable Mention
- VaSID College Division All-State Second Team
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Aubri Whatcott

- AAC First Team
- AAC All-Academic
- NAIA AVCA All-Region – Northeast Region

Lauren Sotomayor

- AAC First Team
- AAC All-Academic
- NAIA AVCA Honorable Mention – Northeast Region

Gabby Courtney

- AAC Champions of Character Team
- AAC All-Academic

Jessica Wells

- AAC All-Academic

Morgan Coulter

- AAC All-Academic

Reese Turner

- AAC All-Academic

Stephanie Reitzloff

- AAC All-Academic

Maddison Miller

- AAC All-Academic

Kassidy Brown

- AAC All-Academic

Sarah Dusse

- AAC All-Academic

### **Men's Basketball**

Jermiah Jenkins

- AAC Player of the Week – Nov. 15, Nov. 30, Dec. 6, Feb. 14 (Four-time winner)
- 2,000<sup>th</sup> career point scored
- AAC First Team All-Conference

Volante Carroll

- AAC All-Defensive Team

### **Women's Basketball**

Kylie Meadows

- AAC First Team All-Conference

Destiny Long

- AAC All-Freshman Team

Jaydn Hoover

- AAC All-Freshman Team

### **Wrestling**

Luke Young

- AAC Champion 184-pound division (1<sup>st</sup> Conference champ in BU history)
- NAIA National Tournament Qualifier, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place finish

Jonathan Baier

- AAC Third Place 125-pound division

Ethan Young

- AAC Third Place 157-pound division

Sam Kirtley

- AAC Fourth Place 285-pound division

### **Men's Indoor Track & Field**

Jaquan Ebron

- Second Place High Jump at AAC Championships
- All Conference Team

Matthew Blankenship

- Third Place 3000-meter race walk at AAC Championships
- All Conference Team

Jaloren Coleman

- Third Place 60-meter dash
- All-Conference Team

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

We will continue to expand opportunities for partnership with community constituents through the solicitation of sponsorships. Efforts will be made to grow the membership.

This year, there has been an intentional focus to build the brand of BU athletics. We have increased and enhanced our level of creative content for our website and social media platforms in effort to tell the BU story, create excitement and push the brand throughout the community. This initiative has created enthusiasm by current athletes (retention) and created interest from prospective student-athletes (recruiting).

## **SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS**

*\*Launched new Instagram pages for Baseball, Softball, Track and Men's Volleyball.*

	<b>Range</b>	<b>Posts</b>	<b>Audience Reach</b>	<b>New Followers</b>	<b>Total Followers</b>	<b>Content Interactions</b>
<b>Instagram</b>	June - July	28	643	11		NA
	August - September	32	14,000	267	1905	3098% increase
	Dec 29 - - Mar 28	20 Plus team page posts	15,300	213	2160	2% increase
<b>Facebook</b>	June -July	28	25000	NA	NA	NA
	August - Sept	32	47,600	NA	3765	86% increase
	Feb -Mar	42	51,600		3800	8% increase

## **DIVISIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Division of Athletics Strategic Plan has been endorsed by members of the Executive Leadership Team and awaits final approval from the Board of Trustees.

With one year remaining, the Division of Athletics has requested to be released from the Adidas contract due to subpar service. We will move forward with Nike which offers more opportunity for on campus exposure, fundraising, and departmental rebates.

Additional women's sports have been explored as a tool to diversify offerings of the student population and to increase enrollment. We have begun the search for a Head Women's Lacrosse Coach and currently recruiting for Women's Golf.

We are currently conducting the search for the Head Men's Soccer Coach and Head Women's Soccer Coach. The goal is to have coaches named by mid-April.

For the first time in three years, we will host the Rammies (Athletic Award Banquet) in-person on the evening of April 24, 2022, in Harman Chapel. You are invited to join us that evening for the awards ceremony.