

Dear Members of the UMN Board of Regents, President Gabel, and Athletic Director Coyle,

I apologize for the very late transmission of this email, but I was away caring for my elderly mother, in very unpleasant Buckeye Land no less (I made it a point of wearing maroon and gold wherever I went), and only returned home last night. I am very concerned, and deeply opposed, to the prospect of eliminating the UMN Men's Tennis team, and I am writing to express my unequivocal opposition to such a poorly reasoned and catastrophically costly policy decision.

The simple truth is that the initiative makes no sense. The Athletics Department needs tens of millions of dollars to recover the losses brought by the temporary suspension of revenue sports, and the disappearance of the lucrative television dollars they bring. But cutting small inexpensive programs like tennis that cost less than \$1 million/year does nothing to really solve that budget problem. And yet such insignificant cuts in the budget enact massive costs in human and educational terms that far exceed those dollars in actual value to the university and its constituents

Hopefully you've heard this from many others and see, as I do, the ill-conceived nature of this proposal. But I want to give you a perspective you may not have heard before, one that comes from a faculty member who participates in the tennis program directly, if at one or two levels removed, and who benefits enormously from the small outlays made to maintain such a highly successful program.

My most important contact is through Dana Young, the wife of men's tennis coach Geoff Young, who is also a former All-American Gopher tennis player who has a banner in the Baseline Tennis Center honoring her accomplishments. Dana serves as the Pro for Baseline, running for-fee tennis drills that I participate in each week, along with summer camps for kids, and private lessons. Many of her assistants are current and former Gopher tennis players, and in this way I have met several of them, including one, an Israeli national, who was also in one of my History courses. Other UMN faculty members, students, and staff, along with the wider public, engage with Gopher tennis with me in this way, and to describe the experience as a wonderful example of UMN public outreach at its best is to vastly understate what happens at the Baseline Tennis Center every single week.

These and many other encounters with the UMN tennis program through its public programs illustrate the very thick cords that link men's tennis to the university overall in ways that advance the educational and public outreach mission of the university. And this for a mere \$800,000/year, one fifth of P.J. Fleck's annual salary. I have had several tennis players in my classes, and each, without exception, was a terrific student (I cannot say that about other UMN athletes I have taught), and the opportunities that the program provides me as a UMN employee and a member of the wider public to connect with its players, and benefit from them as people, points to the horrible loss that would ensue were the university to cut a program which does so much unrecognized work to advance the UMN brand and educational and public outreach mission, and at so little cost.

Why would you cut all of this amazing success and good work when it will not even come close to solving the current budget shortfall? To cut Men's Tennis is to act in a dispiritingly short sighted and hard headed and ill-conceived way, and I ask that you vote to reject this proposal decisively and unequivocally.

Respectfully,

Dr. JB Shank