

Dear Senators,

Thank you very much for asking the University of Minnesota for credible answers regarding their choice to terminate our Olympic sports. The poor choices by the current administration and the Regents have now exposed the University of Minnesota to expensive legal action. How much money will be lost during the next several years attempting to defend their poor choices? How much money was saved by terminating our Olympic sports? What was the projected athletic department deficit when this decision was made? What is the current financial position of athletic department? What financial commitments has the administration received from the alumni to keep the sports in place?

It is disgraceful that the current administration has chosen to scapegoat Title IX while simultaneously reducing opportunities for women. While simultaneously eliminating three men's sports, the University of Minnesota administration wrongfully decided to reduce opportunities for women by cutting team rosters and terminating future participation. The administration inaccurately claims that these women do not enjoy meaningful participation opportunities. As former student-athletes, who participated with dozens of teammates, we understand very well how meaningful these opportunities have been and continue to be.

The current administration continues to defend its backward-thinking choices, which if allowed to proceed will continue to eliminate opportunities for women. If the administration does not change course, these women will not have the opportunity to achieve excellence both academically and athletically. There will be real consequences for women if the current short-sighted choices are not corrected. Surely these women, and the people of Minnesota to invest in the University of Minnesota, deserve a credible explanation of the poor choices that the current leadership continues to pursue.

We do not wish to be recognized for sharing the following example with you. However, we will be happy to explain further and answer your questions. We are very active supporters of the University of Minnesota, former student-athletes, and our son is currently a senior on the Track and Field team. In 2006, we were fortunate to establish a track and field scholarship for women student-athletes pursuing a degree in science and engineering. Clearly, our expectation is to provide greater opportunities to women pursuing careers in science and engineering. It is our understanding that there are many talented women who are not able to pursue their combined intellectual and athletic potential because of financial constraints. These women will not have the opportunity to achieve excellence both academically and athletically if the current short-sighted choices by the administration and Regents are not corrected.

Thank you very much for continuing your advocacy for credible answers from the University of Minnesota.

Best Wishes,

John and Becky Siekmeier  
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