

FUNDING

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scale in areas such as facilities maintenance.

A long-term solution to the problem now waits for the next meeting of the State Legislature in January. One possible avenue is to de-couple the Oregon Lottery's Sports Action funds from the general lottery fund, and use that to help supplement the athletic budgets.

The university athletic departments were to have received money generated by the Sports Action game, but when the lottery did not bring in enough money to cover its general fund predictions the universities were left with only about \$450,000.

"It has been up to the Legislature, and this will force the issue," said Rep. David Dix (D-Eugene). "More often than not the Legislature has shirked the responsibility."

Dix said he is interested in separating the Sports Action money from the general lottery fund, which would generate approximately \$3 to \$5 million a year for the athletic departments. He said he believes "we would see some growth if we put some money into it."

Thomas Bartlett, chancellor for the Oregon State System of Higher Education, said another option is to take money from another program to help with the deficit, but added there are no funds available.

"The question is, which is the lesser of some bad solutions," he said.

Neither Brand nor Bartlett would speculate on what the Legislature might do, and both said they are waiting to see what action it takes.

Here is the option that no one wants to consider: Oregon could drop out of the Pacific-10 Conference or drop intercollegiate athletics. The Board meeting came in the wake of statements made by Brand in a recent Eugene Register-Guard article, in which he said that if athletics do not receive some kind of help from the state the University may have to drop out of the Pac-10. He went on to say he would rather see Oregon drop athletics altogether

than move to a less prestigious conference.

Brand's comments were labeled as "scare tactics" and "a bunch of bull" by some local legislators, but in his defense he said the press had "sensationalized" his statements.

"I think we got their attention," he said. "(Dropping out of the Pac-10) is the most dire prediction you could make. We are not contemplating that right now."

Brand stressed the importance of being affiliated with the Pac-10. "Membership in the Pac-10, in addition to advantages athletically, also has advantages academically," he said. "Universities, like people, are known by the company they keep. I would rather be associated with Berkley and Stanford than with Idaho State."

"This would be a much worse university if we didn't have collegiate athletics at this level," he said.

Athletic Director Bill Byrne was unavailable for comment.

The University gets about \$1.5 to \$2.5 million from its affiliation with the Pac-10 every year through gate receipts and Rose Bowl profits, Brand said. If the University dropped out of the conference that money would be lost, but the cost of running the athletic department would remain the same.

"This is where we are," Bartlett said. "We don't have many options. (Lifting the enrollment cap) is exactly contrary to what we want to be doing, but there are times when you have to deal with the problem."

"This is one of those times," he said.

Dan Williams, University vice president for administration, expressed concern about the situation.

"This reverses the enrollment trend," he said. "To solve one problem we are creating another. It is a good solution in that it shows that the Board is interested, but it is just a beginning."

"It's very interesting," Brand said. "I've spent a year telling people about the problem with the academic funding, but I didn't get nearly the attention compared to when I talked about athletics ... and that worries me."

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