

## **CIS Plans to Become The Destination of Choice**

October 2008

These are exciting times for Canadian Interuniversity Sport! There are a variety of economic, and market forces that are shifting that will have a profound impact on CIS.

Escalating fuel prices, the global financial crisis, and decreased flight capacity have resulted in significant uncertainty and increased expenses for league operations and competition travel.

Recently there has been an increase in newly accredited universities seeking to compete in CIS – particularly within Canada West.

The NCAA decision to open its doors to Canadian universities is a significant shift in market forces. The landscape has changed with the arrival of this strong competitor in the marketplace. While there has always been competition between Canadian universities and American schools for student-athletes, now there is competition between CIS and the NCAA for Canadian universities. With the introduction of competition for member universities, business as usual is not an option. CIS must be proactive to retain market share and nourish the future of university sport in Canada. The NCAA arrival is a catalyst to deliver more value to CIS members.

CIS is at a key point in our development and the time is right to make changes that support our vision of becoming the destination of choice for Canadian student-athletes to pursue excellence in academics and athletics.

To that end CIS conducted a member satisfaction survey in March 2008. The survey results indicated that we value and take great pride in the “Canadian” identity of our league. We are proud of the success of our student-athletes and the balance between athletics and academics. We agree that becoming the destination of choice is a compelling vision and there is important work to be done to “walk the talk” and further that goal.

Marketing /branding /advocacy are the top priorities and the survey indicated that there is much work to be done to realize our potential in these areas. We want to strengthen our connections with the national sport community. We are proud of our governance, yet frustrated that we are often mired in internal conflicts and spend too little time investing in repositioning CIS for long term growth. Survey respondents indicated that the current athletic financial awards policy does not contribute to CIS becoming the destination of choice.

The CIS Board digested the results of the 2008 member survey, and reflected upon strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. In April 2008 the Board developed a series of strategies / projects / activities to deliver greater value to CIS members and to accelerate our work to become the destination of choice. These activities were incorporated in to the 2008-2011 CIS Strategic Plan, which the CIS membership approved at the June 2008 CIS annual general meeting.

Ten of the key elements of the plan related to responding to the survey feedback, responding to the market conditions, and becoming the destination of choice appear below. The ten items below are in addition to, and complement the on-going core work of CIS: hosting 19 National Championships, and fielding teams to World University Championships and Universiades.

	<b>Becoming the Destination of Choice</b>
1	<p><b>Comprehensive review</b> Undertake a comprehensive review regarding the future of Canadian university sport, to determine what is required to achieve the “Destination of Choice” vision:</p> <p>a) The comprehensive review to include dialogue with external stakeholders (National Sport Organizations, PSOs, high schools, National Sport Centres, Road to Excellence, etc). The Member Survey identified a strong desire to strengthen linkages with the National Sport Community, and that those linkages will contribute to becoming the destination of choice.</p> <p>b) The comprehensive review to explore collaboration / partnership opportunities with CCAA, and the possibility of tiering.</p> <p>c) The comprehensive review to include consideration of how to strengthen the competitive approach within CIS and a coordinated / joint review of Regional Association and CIS competition schedules and travel related issues.</p>
2	<p><b>Strengthening Internal Linkages to Become the Destination of Choice</b> An element of becoming the destination of choice involves improving communications, engagement and linkages between university athletics and universities. An advocacy sub-committee will be struck and tasked with developing a plan which could include activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a generic PowerPoint presentation articulating the benefits and contributions of athletics to universities.</li> <li>- Meeting with university presidents, university board chairs etc.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Becoming the Destination of Choice through enhancing CIS Policies</b></p> <p>a) Athletic Scholarships In order to compete to be the destination of choice on a more equal footing with the NCAA, greater flexibility is needed in the AFA policies, therefore the Board commissions the AFA Committee to draft revisions to the AFA policy for membership discussion and approval, designed to retain talent in Canada and advance CIS as the destination of choice.</p> <p>This work involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A review of the core principles,</li> <li>- Exploring upper end flexibility of AFA amounts for any one athlete within a capped total envelope available for the entire team,</li> <li>- Reviewing the CIS and NCAA entering and continuing averages requirements; the differences between the two; and the impact if any of that gap on CIS becoming the destinations of choice;</li> <li>- And compliance / AFA policing options to address perceptions or actual incidents of infractions.</li> </ul> <p>Other CIS policies (eligibility, etc.) will be reviewed to determine if they contribute to or hinder CIS in becoming the destination of choice.</p>
4	<p><b>Improving Marketing / CIS Branding / Keeping People Informed</b></p> <p>a) To strengthen the CIS brand in the marketplace and become the destination of choice, the Board commissions the Marketing Committee to lead the development of a comprehensive branding plan for CIS that speaks to being the destination of choice. (CIS logo renewal, CIS logos on uniforms, signage in member facilities, overhaul of branding requirements for CIS Championships so the CIS look and feel is enhanced, etc.)</p> <p>b) To enhance the depth of communication and inform, educate and engage the membership Monthly Marketing Updates will be circulated from the CIS office. The updates to include information about the TV strategy, broadcast schedule, branding, sponsorship, equipment suppliers, etc.</p>

5	<p><b>Enhancing Governance</b></p> <p>The 2008 Member Survey identified several areas of frustration that relate to governance. The Board commissions the Constitution Committee and Equity - Equality Committee to look into the following and make recommendations to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revision of voting structure at the CIS AGM;</li> <li>- Gender requirement for voting at the AGM;</li> <li>- 2/3 voting threshold for eligibility and AFAs;</li> <li>- Board and Committee structure/composition;</li> <li>- Code of conduct.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Enhancing CIS Championships</b></p> <p>CIS Championships are an important part of our work, and there is a significant room for improvement. The Board commissions the Sport Committee and Marketing Committee to develop strategies and policies for enhancing Championships. Elements to review include enhancing the student-athlete experience, reviewing costs of Hosting, costs of participating, the focus on treating all sports in a similar fashion, CIS branding at CIS Championships, environmental impacts, etc.</p>
7	<p><b>Celebrating Excellence</b></p> <p>Celebrating excellence is a high priority, and yet there is a low level of satisfaction with our performance to date. The Board will develop a strategy for enhancing recognition of Academic All Canadians, major award winners, all-stars, record breakers, coaching milestones etc.</p>
8	<p><b>Enhancing Bilingualism</b></p> <p>CIS is composed of members and student-athletes from both the Canadian francophone and Anglophone communities. CIS confirms its intention to ensure the presence and quality of both official languages in its organization. CIS will pursue its efforts to ensure the presence and quality of the two official languages, both spoken and written, in its publications, its website, its promotional and information sharing tools, and at all its events throughout Canada.</p>
9	<p><b>Informing Decision Making through Research</b></p> <p>The Research and Development Committee will conduct a Membership Satisfaction Survey every 2 years to measure progress as it relates to evolving towards becoming the destination of choice.</p> <p>Annual audit/survey on matters with strategic importance will be done every other year to complement the Membership Satisfaction Survey. Results will be provided in a Biennial R &amp; D Report Card.</p>
10	<p><b>Strengthening the Brand – Responding to the NCAA decision to open its membership to Canadian universities</b></p> <p>The Board commissions the writing of a discussion paper on the topic to deepen our collective understanding of the issues and its implications. Senior leaders from CIS will meet with the Presidents from universities who have signaled their interest in the NCAA option. The Board to convene a special meeting of the CIS membership in April 2009 to discuss the paper, and the future of CIS. Motions will be drafted and put before the CIS membership in June 2009.</p>