

To: Dr. Erika Paterson, ENGL 301 Instructor

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Date: January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Subject: Proposal for Increasing non-varsity student turn-out at Varsity home games

**Background:**

With an undergraduate student population of near 60,000 students, it is shocking that varsity games regularly attract crowds of 50-100 people. With such a large student body, there is a significant opportunity to generate revenue from the numerous varsity games that happen every weekend. Varsity teams at UBC demonstrate some of the best talent in Canadian athletics and students at UBC are given easy access to these games

Games given promotion such as football's 'Homecoming', men's hockey's 'Winter Classic', and basketball's 'Courtside' have received good student turn-out. This shows that UBC's students have the capacity to attend varsity games, if games are given adequate promotion.

**Overview:**

This objective of this proposal is to determine the feasibility of increasing the turn-out of non-varsity sports affiliated UBC at varsity home games.

**Problem:**

Low student turn-out at varsity games means that the athletic department does not generate revenue from the games. This also negatively affects the perception of UBC as a school with low school spirit.

This low attendance due in part to the promotion of games through channels that are limited to the athlete population. Games are promoted through social media via Facebook and Instagram posts, but most of the followers are either current or past UBC athletes. There is no good way for non-sports affiliated UBC students to get current information about UBC varsity games.

**Need:**

An increased awareness of varsity games directed to the general student body would increase revenue generated by the athletic department as well as improve school spirit.

**Proposed solution:**

The UBC Athletic department needs to find ways to encourage non-varsity sport affiliated students to attend games. I propose two solutions to this problem.

1. Increase the varsity athlete recognition within first year residences.
  - By increasing the profiles of students within small communities like residence floors or buildings, students might have a stronger connection with the athletes and so, would be more inclined to go see a game.
2. New marketing strategy towards non-athletes
  - A possible solution to increased exposure for non-varsity students might be the creation of areas or billboards where game times can be found. As of right now,

the majority of the individuals who follow ‘@ubctbirds’ on Facebook and Instagram are current student athletes or close friends with athletes.

- Determine the feasibility of making varsity games less game oriented, and more social. This might be done by providing low cost meals at games or beer.

### **Scope:**

To assess the feasibility of increasing student turn-out at games, I will devise a survey to address several lines of inquiry.

- What is the current level of awareness of varsity games within the non-varsity athlete community?
- What is the best way to send out the information about the time of games?
- Would increasing the social aspect of going to a sports game increase the likelihood of non-varsity athlete affiliated students attending varsity games?
- What are the barriers (cost and staff capacity) that might hinder this proposal?

### **Methods:**

I would first determine a baseline by asking the athletics department for the statistics of student turn-out for all home games. I would then use a survey to primarily target first year students who live on campus as they are those who can most easily attend games. This survey will address the lines of inquiry listed above.

### **Limitations:**

As the majority of people that I know at UBC are student athletes, my data collection through survey distribution may reach a disproportionate number of athletes, relative to the actual student demographic. The information gathered may not be relevant to those students at UBC who are the ones who need to be targeted.

### **My Qualifications:**

As a fourth-year varsity athlete on the women’s field hockey team, and a spectator at many different varsity games, I have observed very low student turn out at my own and other varsity games. I have witnessed the low spectator turnout at games and I have seen how a good crowd can impact the energy and momentum of a game. As a member of a small sport, I have had first-hand experience with the importance of spectators and the consequent funding limitations.

### **Conclusion:**

Varsity home games present an excellent opportunity for the athletic department within the university to generate revenue and increase school spirit. By the end of my project I hope to be able to propose several low-cost solutions to increase the student turn-out at varsity games.