

# **NORTHEAST CONFERENCE**



## **STRATEGIC PLAN: 2008-2012**

**CARR SPORTS ASSOCIATES, INC.**



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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The Northeast Conference and its member institutions seek to identify and implement strategies which best serve and strengthen the Conference's future in NCAA Division I. The Northeast Conference and its membership recognize the value of strategic planning as a vital management tool. The Northeast Conference contracted with Carr Sports Associates, Inc. (CSA) in July 2007 to guide the Conference through a strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process – a continual process -- also allows the Northeast Conference to meet changes in the internal and external environments in which it operates: respective campuses and governing boards, NCAA and state and federal agencies.

## INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- A strategic plan that is derived from the [revised as (and when) necessary] Mission and Vision of the Conference.
- A strategic plan document that that is continually reviewable and updatable.
- Broad participation by the Northeast Conference with internal and external constituencies that continually encourages stakeholder advocacy.
- A comprehensive analysis of the Northeast Conference's operating environment that identifies internal strengths and weaknesses along with external threats and opportunities.
- Appropriate benchmarks with selected NCAA Division I conferences. Conferences may include the America East, Patriot League, Metro Atlantic Athletic and the West Coast Conferences.
- Identification of resource requirements for the Conference's infrastructure, programs and member services.
- Identification of opportunities for the Conference to collaborate with external service providers, such as marketing and communications organizations.



## PROCESS

The planning process involved collaboration among Northeast Conference stakeholders: Presidents, Faculty Athletics Representatives (FAR), Athletics Directors, Senior Women Administrators (SWA), coaches, student-athletes and the Northeast Conference staff. The process also included “benchmarking” the Northeast Conference against selected NCAA Division I conferences. The Conference Staff and CSA facilitated and supported the planning process. The planning process will continue through a discrete review process orchestrated by the Conference Commissioner.

## CORE VALUES

The following is a list of Core Values for the Northeast Conference:

- Academic Achievement and Integrity**
- Student-Athlete Centered**
- Sportsmanship**
- Athletic Achievement**
- Equity and Diversity**
- Rules Compliance**
- Fiscal Stability and Integrity**
- Community Partnership**
- National Engagement**

## NORTHEAST CONFERENCE MISSION STATEMENT

*The Northeast Conference is committed to providing quality athletics competition integral to and consistent with the academic missions set forth by its member institutions. It is dedicated to providing opportunity for student-athletes to achieve their fullest potential both in athletic competition and in the classroom. The NEC ensures that personal development of the student-athlete is given highest priority and in doing so, shall uphold the principles of ethical conduct, sportsmanship and equity.*

*In pursuing this mission, the conference pledges to:*

- A. Provide its member institutions the opportunity to conduct intercollegiate athletics as an integral component of their academic programs;*
- B. Enhance educational opportunities for young men and women, and provide an environment in which integrity, leadership, academic achievement, athletics performance, personal growth, and sportsmanship can be developed;*
- C. Strive for a proper balance between the athletic and educational experiences of student-athletes at each of its member institutions;*



***D. Initiate, promote, organize and improve intercollegiate athletics competition among its member institutions;***

***E. Conduct Conference business in an atmosphere that fosters camaraderie and willingness by all to support inter-university goals and solve problems in the best interests of all concerned.***

***F. Assist member institutions in complying with NCAA and Northeast Conference rules and regulations:***

***G. Maintain responsible fiscal management;***

***H. Enhance member institutions' compliance with federal and state laws regarding gender equity and insure that Conference activities are conducted in a manner free of gender, racial or sexual bias.***

## **NORTHEAST CONFERENCE VISION STATEMENT**

***The Northeast Conference will be recognized as a NCAA Division I leader for student-athlete achievement, integrity, sportsmanship, competitiveness and national engagement.***

## **NORTHEAST CONFERENCE PROFILE**

### **We Are the Northeast Conference**

We are a conference of independent and public four-year colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic section of the northeast United States.

We are a conference composed of 10 to 14 institutions.

We are committed to continually striving to upgrade the caliber and reputation of all the championship sports we sponsor.

We are a conference whose members continually strive for academic standards that support institutional missions on all of our campuses.

We agree to abide by certain minimum investment standards within the conference in selected primary sports to improve as an overall entity (the NEC).

We seek an internally competitive conference, with balanced levels of success among all institutions over reasonable periods of time.

We support equity in athletics structures as guided by the NCAA gender equity principles and U.S. Title IX.

We support a diverse representation in our coaching, administrative and student-athlete populations.



We aim to be clearly qualified to compete within NCAA Division I in all of our championship sports.

We support efforts to control the cost of athletics, but expect that all of our programs will be funded in a manner that allows them to remain competitive.

We are a conference that desires to take a national lead in the principles of good sportsmanship.

We seek regional and national recognition for our student-athletes.

We believe that our athletes are students first, and we celebrate the accomplishments of our athletes as scholars.

We understand the value of reasonable geographical coherence and accessibility among conference members.

We welcome new members to the conference, in whole or in part (as associate members for select sports), as long as those new members have the near-term potential to contribute to improving the conference's athletic and academic reputations.

Our minimum institutional standard for admission is an average SAT score of 1,000 or higher.

We require members with accreditation by a regional accrediting body.

We seek new members with a tradition of success or a commitment to success in a balanced program of academics and athletics.

We prefer an enrollment large enough to field programs in 75% of the championship sports sponsored by the NEC, but less than 10,000 to preclude a continual advantage due primarily to sheer volume.

We seek new members possessing the potential to improve the conference's men's and women's basketball fortunes (i.e. improved RPI ratings) within a few years and willing to make a commitment to continue investing in these programs.

We would like new members to have total athletics operating budgets in excess of \$5 million, but less than \$12 million.

We want institutions that strive to retain and graduate student-athletes at a rate equal to, or better than, that of the general student population.

We require basketball arenas that can seat more than 2,000 people and football stadiums that can seat more than 4,000. We also seek institutions that have facilities at a quality level to host conference championships in at least three sports.

We do not welcome institutions attempting to de-emphasize their athletics programs or de-value their academic missions. Institutions coming from Division II, Division III or the NAIA are encouraged to join if they commit to the minimum standards above and demonstrate the potential to raise their men's and women's basketball profiles through investment, the hiring of good coaches, effective recruiting, sound scheduling, etc.



A potential new member's location must certainly be considered for its effects upon travel, cost and climate. Therefore, our primary focus will be on institutions located within 75 miles of the current perimeter boundaries.

A new member must have the infrastructure (personnel and facilities) to capably support regular media coverage, and the stated desirability to enhance NEC television coverage and marketing efforts.

We seek new members with demonstrated ability to attract solid support from a core of loyal spectators from both the local community and the student population.

We expect a commitment to appropriate levels of athletic administrative support (e.g. assistant ADs, trainers, SIDs, etc.) to operate a quality program in the areas of competition, administration, compliance, event management, media coverage, etc.

## KEY PLANNING LINKS

The following NEC, NCAA and Division I membership materials and activities have been identified as having a significant influence on the character and strategic direction of NEC.

- **NEC Vision Statement**
- **NEC Mission Statement**
- **NEC Core Values**
- ***2008-09 Northeast Conference Policy Manual***
- ***2008-09 NCAA Division I Manual – Constitution, Operating Bylaws and Administrative Bylaws***
- ***We Are the Northeast Conference***
- **NCAA Division I Athletics Certification**
- **Northeast Conference Financial Statements**



## PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions characterize the Northeast Conference and were fundamental to the initial planning process. They evolved from a “SWOT Analysis” (Appendix 10), input from the Northeast Conference Strategic Planning Committee, Northeast Conference stakeholders, benchmarking materials developed during the planning process, the Northeast Conference profile (“We are the Northeast Conference”), a review of Northeast Conference and NCAA materials, and an awareness of national developments in NCAA-sponsored intercollegiate athletics.

1. The Northeast Conference is committed to a composition of four-year independent and public colleges and universities in the Mid-Atlantic and New England sections of the northeast United States.
2. The sponsorship of Northeast Conference Intercollegiate Athletics at the NCAA Division I level, along with those institutions that sponsor FCS football, is consistent with the memberships’ respective missions and visions.
3. The Northeast Conference will comply with all applicable Federal, State and NCAA requirements.
4. The Northeast Conference is committed to the welfare and development of its student-athletes, especially their academic success leading to graduation.
5. The Northeast Conference is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, gender equity and non-discrimination.
6. The Conference will be a national leader in the principles of good sportsmanship.
7. The Northeast Conference’s current (2009) sponsorship of championships in 22 sports exceeds NCAA Division I minimum requirements.
8. The Northeast Conference is committed to upgrading the caliber and reputation of all of its championship sports.
9. Conference members agree to abide by financial minimums/standards in selected Primary Sports and Sports of Emphasis as established by the Northeast Conference Council of Presidents.
10. The Northeast Conference wishes to hold NCAA Division I automatic bids in all of its championship sports.
11. Competition facilities of Northeast Conference institutions should conform to NCAA Division I regulations while ensuring student-athlete safety and adequately accommodating spectators.
12. The Conference expects its members with the ability to upgrade athletic facilities or those that are building new facilities to meet NCAA minimum standards in those sports.
13. The Northeast Conference expects each member to commit to appropriate levels of athletic administrative support to enable quality member and Conference operations.
14. The Northeast Conference and its membership will be engaged in the NCAA legislative process and shaping of NCAA-sponsored intercollegiate athletics.

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

A Situational Analysis was completed during the planning process to provide a comprehensive description of the salient internal and external environmental factors that influence the Northeast Conference's ability to achieve its Mission and Vision.

The Situational Analysis used the "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)" technique and it is presented at Exhibit 10.

## CRITICAL ISSUES

After considering the Planning Assumptions and the Situational Analysis, the following set of the Critical Issues were developed that most influence the Northeast Conference's strategic direction:

### I. Foundation Documentation

- Present an Up-to-date Vision and Mission statements, benchmarks of performance and Conference profile.

### II. Northeast Conference Profile

- **Agreeing on a common Northeast Conference Vision**  
Developing an agreed upon realistic, compelling and concise driving-force Vision is foundational to strengthening the Northeast Conference's position in NCAA Division I.
- **Determining the appropriate Northeast Conference profile**  
The Northeast Conference's desire to achieve its Mission and Vision along with effectively developing the Northeast Conference brand necessitates a precise articulation of the Conference's profile.
- **Establishing meaningful NEC benchmarks**  
The Conference's engagement in meaningful benchmarking is integral to NEC goal setting along with establishing accurate measurements.

### III. Student-Athlete Welfare

- Achieve an enhanced student-athlete experience (championships, CHAMPS/Life Skills, SAAC, quality regular season competition experience, etc).
- Improve student-athlete academic performance.

### IV. Integrity and Sportsmanship

- Commit to athletic compliance integrity and sportsmanship, academic integrity and financial integrity.



## **V. Gender Equity and Diversity**

- Commit to promoting and providing gender equity and diversity among its members' athletes and staffs and within the Conference Office.

## **VI. Membership**

- Attain and maintain desired membership (total members, football members, sports sponsorship, associate members, membership contingency planning, and other requirements).

## **VII. NCAA Division I Environment**

- Improve the Northeast Conference's presence and influence within the NCAA governance structure and within the NCAA-sponsored intercollegiate athletics industry.

## **VIII. Competitive Positioning**

- Gain a strengthened competitive position within Division I.

## **IX. Northeast Conference Brand**

- Establish a new Conference brand.



## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

<b>GOAL CHARACTERISTICS:</b>	Goals, Outcome Measurements (when applicable) and supporting Strategies were derived from, and are keyed to, the Critical Issues; they are presented below.
<b>CHALLENGING BUT ACHIEVABLE</b>	
<b>DEFINE &amp; COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS</b>	As a general rule for scheduling the continual review of this Strategic Plan's, the Conference Office will prepare a review of 2 Critical Issues and their accompanying Goals and Strategies for each President's Council meeting, starting in the spring 2009.
<b>MEASURE PROGRESS</b>	
<b>ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
<b>DESCRIBE NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS</b>	By the fall 2010, the Strategic Planning Committee will review and report on the entire plan with special emphasis on Assumptions, Core Values and Profile.

### I. Foundation Documentation

#### Goal:

- A. Agree on the Northeast Conference Vision, Mission, applicable benchmarks and profile.

#### Strategies:

- A-1. Develop and approve a Vision Statement that represents the Northeast Conference's Mission and Core Values.

Due Date: Initially Approved December 7, 2007. Completed (Page 4)  
Responsibilities: Northeast Conference Strategic Planning Committee  
Resource Requirements: None

- A-2. Develop and approve a Mission Statement that represents the Northeast Conference's Core Values

Due Date: Initially Approved December 7, 2007. Completed (Page 3)  
Responsibilities: Northeast Conference Strategic Planning Committee  
Resource Requirements: None

- A-3. Develop and approve a set of athletic and academic benchmarks that are congruent with the Northeast Conference's Vision, Mission and Core Values.

Due Date: Assumed approved at President's Council in September 2008. Completed  
Responsibilities: Northeast Conference Strategic Planning Committee  
Resource Requirements: None



A-4. Develop and approve a Northeast Conference profile.

Due Date: Initially approved at the start of the planning processes by adopting the Membership Committee's document entitled "We are the NORTHEAST CONFERENCE (Page 4)."

## II. Student-Athlete (SA) Welfare

### Goal:

A. Improve the Northeast Conference's student-athlete academic performance.

Measurements: (NCAA-APR and GSR), Federal Graduation Rates, Conference awards, and NCAA awards)

### Strategies:

A-1. Maintain strict adherence to NCAA academic policies and standards regarding:

- Non-qualifier admittance
- Transfer policies

Due Date: AY 2009-10, ongoing

Responsibilities: Presidents, ADs, FARs

Resource Requirements: None

A-2. Enhance Academic Support systems

- Employ the equivalent of at least one full-time employee (i.e., academic support professional(s) who understands NCAA requirements and focuses on degree attainment progress) for SA academic support.
- Require study-hall for identified/at-risk student-athletes and/or freshmen.
- Provide student-athletes with computers or have computers available for student-athletes to use (e.g., in study hall).
- Establish and enforce a missed class policy.
- Utilize NCAA "At Risk SA Working Group" modeling tools and academic best practices.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Campus administrators, Presidents

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

A-3. Implement systems to monitor SA academic performance

- Track institutional APR improvement plans.
- Schedule NCAA staff to attend conference meetings.

Due Date: AY 2009, ongoing

Responsibilities: ADs, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None



#### A-4. Improve Member SA Retention and Graduation

##### A-4.1. Implement Conference-wide academic matrix goals:

- Maintain SA graduation rate higher than the general student body.
- SA'S GPAs to be equal to or greater than those of the general student body.

Due Date: Introduce goals in AY 2008-09; achieve goals by AY 2011-12

Responsibilities: Member institutions

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

##### A-4.2. Establish campus committees to review and make recommendations from the APR Improvement Plans of underperforming teams/institutions (e.g., increased academic support, change recruiting patterns, limit transfers, provide additional guidance to freshmen).

Due Date: AY 2009-10

Responsibilities: Membership

Resource Requirements: None

##### A-4.3. Continue to recognize and publicize Conference-wide academic success.

Due Date: AY 2009-10 and ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office with input from membership

Resource Requirements: Minimal

#### **Goal:**

#### B. Enhance the Northeast Conference's student-athlete experience.

#### **Strategies:**

##### B-1. Ensure SA safety at athletic events

- Report all safety issues to host institution in a timely manner.
- Work with game/meet officials to identify and address any issues prior to start of competition, and follow-up with any that may have been identified during competition.
- Circulate a 'best practices' document for member institutions to use as a safety guide.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership Administrators, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None



## B-2. Maintain Quality of Facilities

- Ensure that all locker rooms are clean and maintained with ample amount of soap, towels, etc.
- Ensure that locker rooms are safe and secure for the duration of the visiting team's and officials' stay.
- Incorporate facility maintenance into institutional game/event operations manual.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

## B-3. Enhance Student-Athlete Championship Experience

B-3.1. Provide student-athletes with quality venues for conference championships.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership Administrators, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

B-3.2. Work with ADs and their staffs to create a check-off list that guides hosting championship events and maintains an expected standard for championship management.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership Administrators, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

B-3.3. Encourage member institutions to host NCAA postseason competition.

Due Date: Begin 2008, ongoing

Responsibilities: ADs, SWAs, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None; however institutions may have expenses associated with facility improvements if they choose to be considered for hosting.

## B-4. Increase Fan Attendance.

B-4.1. Each member institution will develop a plan to increase attendance in men's and women's basketball.

Due Date: AY 2009-10

Responsibilities: Membership Administrators and coaches

Resource Requirements: Varied by institutions

B-4.2. Promote SA attendance at other conference sport contests

Due Date: Begin 2008, ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership Administrators, Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None



B-4.3. Encourage visible presence of University faculty and administrators at games.

Due Date: Begin 2008, ongoing

Responsibilities: Campus administrators—marketing directors

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

### **III. Integrity and Sportsmanship**

#### **Goal:**

- A. Maintain the Northeast Conference's commitment to integrity to include: academic and athletic rules compliance; sportsmanship; and financial responsibility and academic integrity:

#### **Strategies:**

A-1. Maintain Rules Compliance and Institutional Control.

A-1.1. Enhance dissemination of NCAA and Northeast Conference Compliance related materials to the membership via the most efficient mediums:

- Distribute compliance FAQ's, pertinent NCAA interpretations and memos, global athletics issues papers and compliance-related information/tools
- Enhance rules education at Conference Meetings; host conference-wide seminar(s), newsletter, Website, and teleconferences

Due Date: January 1, 2009 and continuing

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: \$1000 – incorporate into Northeast Conference budget

A-1.2. Include booster, PSA and other rules compliance (gambling, amateurism, etc.) information in Conference publications; (e.g., programs, fan guide, website). Create a radio or TV PSA on compliance.

Due Date: AY 2009-10; phase in beginning August 1, 2009 or date of 1st 2009-10 publication(s)

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: TV/radio \$1,000-5,000

A-1.3. Ensure relevant NCAA and Conference rules-education information is presented on each member institution's athletics website and in primary publications:

- Develop consistent message (NCAA and Conference logos, print layout)
- Develop an annual checklist to be completed by member institutions on rules compliance issues.

Due Date: AY 2009-10; phase in beginning August 1, 2009 or date of 1st 2009-10 publication

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Nominal



A-1.4. Ensure that secondary violations are being reported by Conference membership – all systems are fully implemented to include membership accountability; identify and monitor trends or problem areas.

Due Date: Quarterly each year  
Responsibilities: Membership, Conference Office  
Resource Requirements: None

A-1.5. Incorporate SAAC administrative liaisons in compliance education (e.g., hot topics and interpretations)

Due Date: Bi-monthly conference calls, ongoing  
Responsibilities: Conference Office, SAAC Advisors  
Resource Requirements: None

A-1.6. Involve external offices (e.g., FAR, financial aid, registrar, academic advising) in rules compliance:

- Agree that the FAR will meet with the president annually.

Due Date: AY 2009-10 and annually thereafter  
Responsibilities: Membership, Presidents, FARs and Conference Office  
Resource Requirements: None

A-1.7. Ensure presidential/external oversight of rules compliance through Conference compliance audits – formally incorporate presidents into audit interview schedule

Due Date: AY 2008-09  
Responsibilities: Conference Office and Membership  
Resource Requirements: None

A-1.8. Engage institutional administrators outside of athletics in Conference compliance audits (e.g., institutional auditor, FAR, faculty athletics committee as appropriate to each member institution):

- Conference office will develop a best practices document and make it available to presidents of member institutions.

Due Date: Begin AY 2009-10  
Responsibilities: Conference Office and Membership  
Resource Requirements: \$500

A-2. Improve Northeast Conference Sportsmanship

A-2.1. Confirm that sportsmanship incidences are reported in a timely fashion - according to Conference procedures - to the Commissioner.

Due Date: Fall 2008; ongoing  
Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office  
Resource Requirements: None



A-2.2. Ensure that agreed-upon Conference Sportsmanship initiatives are fully-implemented on each campus; review annually.

- Require ADs to report success stories, challenges, conduct issues, etc. during Spring Meeting.

Due Date: Spring 2009; ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None

A-2.3. Reinforce sportsmanship standards with officials' coordinators and ensure they are enforcing standards and reporting conduct issues to the Conference Office in a timely fashion; Conference Office will formally communicate expectations with coordinators – include in Conference Policy Manual and Game Management Guides.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; Ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None

A-2.4. Hold Conference coaches accountable for their unsportsmanlike actions as well as those of their student-athletes; enforce penalties.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; Ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office, Membership, ADs and Presidents

Resource Requirements: None

A-2.5. Engage campus constituencies (e.g., faculty, coaches, student-athletes, SAAC, student government) in discussions and implementation of sportsmanship best practices – for example:

- Student-athlete or coach read sportsmanship announcement prior to competition and utilize video boards and recordings
- Implement pre-game hand shake for competing student-athletes – where appropriate
- Membership student-led promotions or campaigns
- Ensure a campus administrator is available at every contest and ensure the visiting team is aware of who the person is.
- Encourage the visiting team to have an administrator present at contests.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; fully implement AY 2009-10

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None

A-3. Maintain Northeast Conference and Member financial responsibility.

A-3.1. Continue to conduct annual external Conference Office audits and report to Finance Committee and Presidents.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: \$15,000/year



A-3.2. Conference Office will continue to provide management of Conference budget – report to the Conference Finance Committee and Presidents.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None

A-4. Ensure Academic Integrity.

A-4.1. Communicate to student-athletes their responsibility in ensuring academic standards and integrity (e.g., good communication on academic issues, honesty, consequences for cheating).

Due Date: Fall 2008; ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership, Ads and academic advisors

Resource Requirements: None

A-4.2. Ensure coaches understand their roles in encouraging academic integrity, including appropriate communication lines with faculty, registrar's office, academic advisors and tutors.

Due Date: Fall 2008; ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership

Resource Requirements: None

## **IV. Gender Equity and Diversity**

### **Goal:**

A. Continue the Northeast Conference's commitment to gender equity and diversity.

Measurements: Title IX, NCAA Certification, Northeast Conference Member Gender Equity and Diversity Plans.

### **Strategies:**

A-1. Create/maintain a Conference-wide commitment to promoting gender equity and diversity for student-athletes, coaches and staff:

- Create an annual gender equity audit of conference services and support for review by appropriate Conference committees and Conference Office per each sport.
- Encourage administrators to attend the NCAA Gender Equity Forums.

Due Date: Spring 2010; annually

Responsibilities: Conference Office with input from Membership

Resource Requirements: None



A-2. Consistent with NCAA Division I Certification, each member institution will have active diversity and gender equity plans. These plans should be shared with the Conference Office to enable a best practices synthesis.

- Introduction of Diversity education programs for the membership at the Conference level.

Due Date: Begin AY 2009-10; fully implement AY 2010-11 ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office with participation from ADs and their appropriate staffs.

Report to Presidents.

Resource Requirements: Modest travel costs

## **IV. Membership**

### **Goal:**

A. Determine the Conference's desired membership.

Measurements: "We Are the Northeast Conference" document and competitive success.

### **Strategies:**

A-1. Determine Conference membership qualifications.

- Review the "We Are the Northeast Conference" document annually.
- Ensure all potential new members identify with agreed upon Conference Mission, Vision, and Core Values, while satisfying caveats outlined in "We Are the Northeast Conference" document.

Due Date: On-going

Responsibilities: Membership Committee and Presidents

Resource Requirements: None

A-2. Define role of Associate membership.

- Accept associate members who can abide by the "We Are the Northeast Conference" document.
- Ensure potential associate members will provide value to the Conference membership through stability, scheduling, financial commitment, competitive strength, etc. (on a sport-by-sport basis).

Due Date: On-going

Responsibilities: Membership Committee, Presidents and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None



**Goal:**

- B. Secure additional Conference members.

Measurements: New membership that adds value to the Northeast Conference.

**Strategies:**

- B-1. Implement approved expansion initiatives.

Due Date: On-going (added Bryant 10/07, Duquesne in football 6/07)

Responsibilities: Commissioner, Membership Committee and Presidents

Resource Requirements: None

- B-2. Seek new members who add value to the Northeast Conference and will stabilize the Conference or individual sports.

- Monitor realignment and membership shifts in other conferences.
- Monitor movement of Division II institutions (when the Division I moratorium is lifted).
- Determine need for potential associate members to enhance and stabilize sponsorship of select sports.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Commissioner, Membership Committee

Resource Requirements: None

## **V. NCAA Division I Environment**

**Goal:**

- A. Improve the Conference's position within the NCAA governance structure and within the intercollegiate athletics industry.

Measurements: National Committee representation.

**Strategies:**

- A-1. Improve the Northeast Conference's representation within NCAA Division I governance.

- Ensure that administrators and coaches are aware of and prepared for upcoming issues affecting conference-sponsored sports

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None



#### A-2. Distribute NCAA Committee vacancy information

- Identify potential Conference representatives and ensure such representatives are prepared for discussion(s) at the National level.
- Actively solicit candidates to fill all NCAA committee vacancies; focus on NCAA membership, nominating football and basketball committees.

Due Date: On-going

Responsibilities: Conference staff

Resource Requirements: None

## VI. Competitive Positioning

### Goal:

- A. Strengthen the Northeast Conference's competitive position within Division I and, for appropriate members, FCS.

Measurements: RPI, Post-Season Ranking, Conference Expenditures and Revenues, Game Attendance

### Strategies:

#### A-1. Strengthen Men's and Women's Basketball

A-1.1. Strive to attract and retain coaches who can produce teams that are competitive amongst similarly positioned leagues (Patriot, MAAC, America East).

- To the extent allowed by compensation confidentiality norms, share compensation, incentive, budget information, blindly, with the Conference Office to enable the Conference Office to conduct comparability analyses with other, appropriate, conferences.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; report annually in fall.

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

A-1.2. Assess attendance, academics and competitive success to determine which practices are most effective; share information within the Conference.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; fully report Fall 2010

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None

A-1.3. Offer non-monetary conference incentives/awards and publicity for increased or maximized attendance through a one-year pilot program.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2009-10; fully implement AY 2011-12

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varies by institution



A-1.4. Require full NCAA allotment of basketball coaches.

Due Date: Begin 2009-10

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

A-1.5. Work towards improving preseason and regular season scheduling opportunities to evaluate RPI and exposure.

Due Date: Begin 2008-09, complete by 2010-11

Responsibilities: Membership ADs, coaches and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varies by institution

A-2. Strengthen other Conference-sponsored sports.

A-2.1. Conduct an analysis of adding additional primary sports.

Due Date: Spring 2010

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office. To be approved by Presidents

Resource Requirements: None

A-2.2. Encourage full-time head coaches in primary sports.

Due Date: AY 2009-10

Responsibilities: Conference Office report annually to Presidents

Resource Requirements: Varied by institution

A-2.3. Determine the Conference's position on escalating Division I standards (expenses, facilities and competition for student-athletes).

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; fully implement AY 2010-11

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: TBD

A-2.4. Continue to evaluate marketplace and the Conference's Position in other (non basketball) sports (e.g. salaries, operating budgets, staffing, facilities) to ensure they are maintaining the ability to compete in Division I, specifically with similarly-positioned conferences and institutions.

Due Date: Begin Fall 2008-09; fully implement AY 2010-11

Responsibilities: Membership and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: None

A-2.5. Institutions that have the ability to upgrade athletic facilities or are building new facilities should meet NCAA minimum standards in those sports.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: ADs and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varies by institution



A-3. Evaluate institutional competitive success on an annual basis.

A-3.1. The Conference Office will provide the Presidents an analysis of Conference place finish by sport over the previous five years, for discussion as desired.

Due Date: Fall 2008 and annually thereafter

Responsibilities: Conference Office and Presidents

Resource Requirements: None

## **VIII. Northeast Conference Brand**

### **Goal:**

A. Establish the appropriate Northeast Conference brand.

Measurements: Desired Northeast Conference Brand (see Northeast Conference Profile)

### **Strategies:**

A-1. Create a Conference Branding Committee consisting of institutional communications/marketing director, athletics SID/marketing director and Conference Office staff to research and develop ideas/strategies for branding the Northeast Conference.

Due Date: Established summer 2009; Ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership marketing experts and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varies by institutions and possible substantial at Conference Office, depending on Committee recommendations .

A-1.1 The Branding Committee should continually review, prioritize, and amend as necessary the initial set of branding initiatives that it developed in 2009 and that the Conference Office distributed to each Member institution in February 2010.

Due Date: Ongoing

Responsibilities: Membership marketing experts and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varies by institutions and possible substantial at Conference Office, depending on Committee recommendations

A-1.2 The Branding Committee should begin to implement, with the Conference Office and Member institutions, its top priority initiatives and report progress thereon at each Presidents Meeting through 2011.

Due Date: Initial report June 2010; Ongoing through 2011

Responsibilities: Membership marketing experts and Conference Office

Resource Requirements: Varies by institutions and possible substantial at Conference Office, depending on Committee recommendations



A-2. Establish a brand that differentiates the Conference from other regional and similarly-positioned conferences.

Due Date: Summer 2009

Responsibilities: Conference Office, Presidents and ADs

Resource Requirements: None to establish the brand. Potentially substantial to implement a new brand.



## STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Essential to the implementation of the Northeast Conference Strategic Plan is a scheduled and systematic review of all key elements.

- This process includes a continual, rolling analysis of the Strategic Plan's progress along with the identification of challenges and changes in the operating environment affecting implementation.
  - The Conference office will present its assessment of two sections of Critical Issues at each President's meeting.
  - The Strategic Planning Committee will in fall 2010 review Core Values, Assumptions and Profile as part of a general overall review.