

PRESIDENTIAL WHITE PAPER

Defining the Fitness and Athletics Experience of a CMC Education



THE CAMPAIGN FOR
CLAREMONT MCKENNA

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Defining the Fitness and Athletics Experience

What is the role of fitness and athletics at a leading liberal arts college? Claremont McKenna College has an opportunity to show how athletics, fitness, and recreation programs can and should work in higher education.

We read about the pervasive problems in the world of amateur athletics, and we become disillusioned. Far too many stories focus on recruiting violations at major universities, doping in the Olympic trials, and sub-par graduation rates among college athletes. Now the real possibility exists that some athletes will go so far as to inject genetic material into their bodies to enhance performance. This obsessive drive to win at any cost tarnishes the higher ideals of fair competition and the challenges of the athletic endeavor.

So it has been extremely rewarding and satisfying to participate in the [College Sports Project \(CSP\)](#), an innovative initiative of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Claremont McKenna College is one of more than 130 Division III schools across the country that have come together in this project to strengthen the bonds between intercollegiate athletics and educational values. The CSP has two clearly stated objectives: “First, athletes are primarily students—their academic outcomes and engagement with a wide variety of campus activities should be representative of their peers—and second, students who participate on intercollegiate athletic teams should do so in an environment that is integrated with and complementary to the educational values of the institution.”

Division III schools have a distinctive role in college athletics—we do not offer scholarships for athletes, and the emphasis is on broadening the educational experience and the simple joy of the game. In general, participation rates in varsity athletics are much higher in Division III schools than in Division I schools. At CMC, for example, approximately 35 to 40 percent of our students participate in a varsity sport at some point during their careers. Participation in sports complements the leadership aspect of our mission.

Athletics has played an important role at CMC since its [inception](#). The College began competing in the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) in 1947-48 when Pomona College and Claremont Men’s College combined to form one athletic team. In 1958-59 Claremont Men’s College combined with Harvey Mudd College and began competition as Claremont-Mudd. The team continued as this entity until the SCIAC began sponsoring women’s sports in 1976-77, at which time it became Claremont-Mudd-Scripps (CMS).

CMS Athletics at a Glance

Varsity Sports Programs	19
SCIAC Titles	156—Men’s Program 68—Women’s Program
National Titles	NAIA—Swimming (1967) NCAA—Tennis (1981)
Distinction	Claremont-Mudd-Scripps is the only team in the SCIAC that has won a conference title in each sport. CMS teams have won all 19 sports at least twice.

While we are proud of our successes on the field, it is perhaps more important that we are creating the proper balance between athletics and our educational mission.

Preliminary data from CSP research indicates that, on the whole, CMC has developed a model college athletics program. We are recruiting student-athletes who are qualified to succeed and excel at CMC. In general, the academic outcomes are strong for these athletes, and there is no major grade point average disparity between athletes and non-athletes. Our athletes are an important part of the residential and social life of campus.

What differentiates CMC from other colleges and universities that struggle with issues of balance and student success? We are very intentional in the way we develop our programs—athletics is much more integrated into the lives of our students than is often the case at larger Division I schools. We have a departmental leadership and coaching staff that understands the mission of the College, and we have effective coordination with our admission office to get students who are the right fit for CMC.

In addition to our focus on quality intercollegiate athletic competition, the College takes a holistic approach to the overall idea of fitness and wellness. We are responding to the needs of the campus population as a whole, including students, faculty, and staff, who are more conscious of wellness and fitness. College campuses (large and small) are developing significant facilities in support of this trend. Peer institutions such as Amherst, Bowdoin, and Kenyon have all recently created or expanded fitness centers to meet campus needs.

How is CMC responding to provide the programs and facilities that will meet the comprehensive needs of our community of athletes and non-athletes? Our existing outdoor facilities and programs are superb. The new Bisantz Family Tennis Center and

associated recreation field are the latest addition to this excellent program. In addition, the proposed land purchase from the Consortium provides an outstanding future plan as the College grows reasonably over time. The Tranquada Student Services Center provides a central location to support health and wellness programs across the Consortium.

We do have some significant challenges, however, with our indoor facilities. The Ducey Gymnasium is an outdated building that was designed for a much smaller campus. Ducey is simply not adequate to support a co-educational program with 19 varsity sports, and it does not provide an NCAA regulation space for basketball and volleyball. To respond to this need, the College has spent several years exploring various options. The current plan calls for a new, comprehensive fitness and athletic center that will replace Ducey Gymnasium. We envision creating a facility with distinctive architecture that will highlight the College's commitment to fitness and athletics and link "indoor" with the "outdoor" by creating enhanced connectivity with the Axelrood Pool and the Zinda Field.

As we move ahead with these programs with the support of alumni and friends, we will provide opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to participate in a range of athletic endeavors. The CMC experience extends well beyond the classroom, and our experiences on the field and in the gym bring us together and push us to excel and challenge ourselves.