



SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY (PA) MOVING FROM NCAA DI TO DIII ATHLETICS:

TRANSITIONING TO DIVISION III EXCELLENCE



Evolving
Student-Centric
Practices

**If the Lord does not
build the house, in
vain do the builders
labor.**

Ps 127:1



Advancing Our Mission: Reclassifying Athletics to NCAA Division III

Guided by our Catholic and Franciscan values, Saint Francis University is committed to providing a supportive, enriching, and transformative experience for every student. To better align with this mission, the Board of Trustees voted to begin the process of reclassifying our athletics program from NCAA Division I to Division III, prioritizing student well-being and a balanced college experience.





Staying True to Our Mission Amid Athletic Transformation

Intercollegiate athletics is growing more complex, driven by changes. As the system becomes more commercial, many Division I schools are shifting resources away from academics to stay competitive. Now is the time for us to have the courage to make a mission-aligned decision—before the decision is made for us.

Strategic Question: DII or DIII?





Prioritizing Student-Athlete

Well-Being and Campus Life



This change allows student-athletes to spend less time traveling and more time engaged in academics, community, and campus life—supporting their full collegiate experience.



By reducing travel demands, this change gives student-athletes more time and energy to devote to their studies—reinforcing our commitment to academic success.



An aerial photograph of the Saint Francis University campus. The image shows a large green lawn, a paved walkway, and a fountain in the foreground. In the background, there are dense green trees and a building. A large red text box is overlaid on the center of the image.

Rooted in Mission, Guided by Values

Saint Francis University takes great pride in living its mission—from the responsible way we lead to the values we uphold. Our decision to reclassify athletics reflects our identity as a Catholic and Franciscan institution, putting students first and aligning every aspect of campus life, including athletics, with our purpose.

Positioning SFU for a Sustainable Future



With external pressures mounting and growing demands on campus resources, this proactive decision ensures we can prioritize what matters most and position Saint Francis University to thrive—academically, financially, and in alignment with our mission—for years to come.



This shift allows us to reinvest in what matters most—student welfare, mission-aligned programs, academic excellence, and campus facilities that support the full student experience.





Taking Bold Steps for a Stronger Future

The announcement reflects extensive research and thoughtful deliberation, ensuring that the needs of students remain at the forefront of our planning and commitment.

Broad Scope, Deep Insight

- I We examined the evolving athletics landscape, including anticipated NCAA reforms and governance changes, with a broad view across Division I's revised model and its implications, as well as perspectives from Divisions II and III and their respective conferences.
- II We dedicated significant time to developing several comprehensive pro formas that modeled various potential changes, taking into account enrollment trends, the athletics operating budget, and projected revenue impacts.
- III Our considerations extended beyond immediate alignment with peer conference schools to include anticipated shifts in the broader landscape, such as the potential closure of PSU branch campuses and its impact on future conference composition.

Steps Ahead

I

Now that the decision has been made, we recognize that change brings both challenges and opportunities. Our immediate priority is to support our students and athletics staff with compassion and understanding. By standing alongside them, we can help them navigate this transition and the choices that lie ahead.

II

Retention of our student-athletes and coaches is a top priority. It is essential that we actively help them understand the opportunities available to them at Saint Francis University—both in the short term and as part of our long-term vision.

III

We are committed to defining and achieving a premier Division III athletics experience at Saint Francis University through a bold, clearly communicated strategy. While internal discussions have begun, we will move quickly to establish a cross-functional team to develop and implement an action plan.

Key Milestones

in the Transition



NCAA Division I transfer windows opened on a rolling basis according to sport. The latest transfer window ended on June 27, 2025 (outdoor track). SFU actively manages the fluid nature of transfer students and will continue to do so moving forward.



The unpredictability of student-athlete behavior—like entering the portal without transferring—makes it difficult to forecast enrollment.





Charting a Course for DIII Excellence

Recognizing the importance of acting now to shape a stronger, more connected student experience, we will launch a cross-functional team to proactively address key areas that define campus life at SFU:

- Franciscan Presence
- Athletics and its integration with student life
- Campus life, engagement, and student well-being
- Academic support and learning environment



From Vision to Action

The road ahead will focus on:

- high-impact practices
- a clear articulation of what ‘premier’ Division III looks like
- a broad range of student activities in our new environment
- facility enhancements
- heavy involvement from current students

A Student Experience Reimagined



Student Recreation



Facilities



Student Involvement Opportunities



High Impact Practices



Student Spirit



The dual identity of being both a student and an athlete is a defining strength of the SFU community—one that isn't going away.

As we move forward, we're committed to reinforcing that balance and making it an even more meaningful and integrated experience.

Financial Aid Implications

I

Moving from NCAA Division I to Division III will involve change. Practically speaking, a significant part of that change requires moving away from a Talent Scholarship model that rewards athletic accomplishment with scholarship dollars.

II

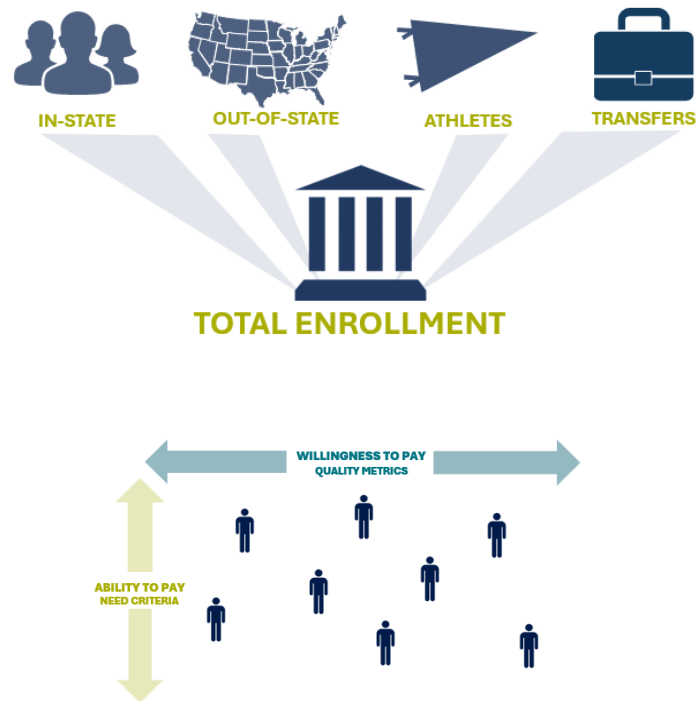
Such a change involves determining how much dollars were spent on such scholarships, how much of that is desired to be "saved," how much of that can be "reinvested" in other aid types, and how do we best spend those dollars?

III

Given those moving targets, how do we establish reasonable goals and a plan to get there?

So — what did we do?

- Created new award populations, using non-athletic student enrollments currently to guide certain decision making.
 - Although we won't be awarding athletic aid, we did develop a plan to track the aid spend on our Athletes to ensure compliance with Division III rules.
 - Created award populations to allow for strategies to accomplish other missional/institutional goals.
- Evaluated existing academic and need level ranges for areas of opportunity to best control spending and maximize our return.
- Tested various merit award amount and need-based aid strategies in an effort to determine the most desirable combination.



Total First-Year Students

2023-24 Consolidated Annual Plan Summary



Enrollment & Financial Impact of Changes				Academic Impact of Changes			
	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Estimated	Change	Academic Measure	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Estimated *	Change
Number of students admitted	10880	12968	2088	Academic Index	3.3	3.3	0.0
Number of students enrolled	1621	1779	158	SAT composite	1037	1039	2
Yield	14.9%	13.7%	-1.2%	ACT composite	21.9	20.7	-1.2
Institutional Revenue				High school GPA	3.5	3.31	0.01
Tuition revenue	\$22,090,980	\$20,220,220	-\$1,870,760	College GPA	3.40	3.25	-0.15
Required fee revenue	\$291,780	\$320,220	\$28,440	Class rank	58	58	0
Room/board revenue	\$14,960,476	\$17,115,557	\$2,155,081	Direct Institutional Financial Aids (weighted)			
Other charges revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	Category	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Estimated	Change
Total revenue	\$37,343,244	\$37,445,997	\$102,753	Tuition	\$13,628	\$14,054	3.1%
Employee dependent waivers	\$49,502	\$51,046	\$1,544	Required fees	\$180	\$180	0.0%
Institutional Aid by Type				Room charge	\$5,450	\$5,652	3.7%
Need-based gift	\$1,568,475	\$2,126,527	\$558,052	Board charge	\$4,818	\$5,008	3.9%
Merit-based gift	\$4,462,722	\$5,023,090	\$560,368	Other charges	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Premier Academic	\$459,098	\$535,325	\$76,227	Total direct cost	\$24,076	\$24,894	3.4%
Special Talent/other talent gift	\$408,700	\$415,021	\$6,321	Non-revenue cost-of-attendance change			\$91
Other institutional gift aid	\$2,713,497	\$2,344,401	-\$369,096	Assumed number in residence halls - Fall 2023-24			1602
Tuition exchange waivers	\$0	\$0	\$0	Assumptions for External Financial Aid			
Total institutional gift aid ³	\$9,612,492	\$10,444,364	\$831,872	Source/Type	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Estimated	Change ⁴
Average institutional gift/student	\$5,930	\$5,871	-\$59	of Funds	Actual	Estimated	Change ⁴
Work-study	\$0	\$0	\$0	Campus-based gift	\$103,613	\$103,613	\$0
Loan	\$0	\$0	\$0	State grant	\$6,390,860	\$6,719,293	\$328,433
Total institutional aid	\$9,612,492	\$10,444,364	\$831,872	Private grant	\$1,266,629	\$4,140,100	\$313,471
Net Tuition/Fee Revenue	\$12,770,276	\$14,877,922	\$2,107,646	Private gift	\$178,622	\$204,791	\$26,169
From change in enrollment	\$1,296,800	\$1,779,000	\$482,200	Private work	\$0	\$0	\$0
From per-student financial aid change	\$1,511,076	\$1,628,922	\$117,846	Private loan	\$0	\$0	\$0
Average Net Tuition/Fee Revenue	\$7,878	\$8,363	\$485	Totals	\$13,283,108	\$14,953,691	\$1,670,583
Tuition & fee discount	\$2,155,081	\$2,155,081	\$0	1. Emp. dep. waivers are treated as lost rev. for these calcs.			
Revenue Minus Unfunded Institutional Aid	\$10,615,195	\$12,722,841	\$2,107,646	2. Minor changes will occur due to rounding.			
Tuition ¹	\$13,368,496	\$15,524,607	\$2,156,111	3. Total institutional gift includes \$0 in cell-by-cell add-ins for exceptions and \$0 in lump sums from the Set-up section.			
Room/board	\$14,960,476	\$17,115,557	\$2,155,081	4. Missing values in base year data will skew the estimates.			
Overall (incl. fees)	\$13,368,496	\$15,524,607	\$2,156,111				
Unfunded institutional gift aid	\$9,612,492	\$10,444,364	\$831,872				
Funded institutional gift aid	\$0	\$0	\$0				
Unfunded tuition discount ¹	39.3%	37.8%	-1.6%				
Unfunded room/board discount	6.3%	5.9%	-0.3%				
Overall unfunded discount ¹	25.8%	24.6%	-1.1%				

Created dozens of scenarios
to find the right one.

Be ready to adapt. This is a big
change, and the aid strategy
will adjust as needed.

**Run the race,
so as to win**

1 Cor 9:24





THANK YOU.

Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D., President, Saint Francis University

Mr. Steve Soba, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Saint Francis University

