

RAMBLE ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Should students be allowed to date their professors?

Yes, if student is over 18
15%

No, it could hinder other students
42%

Yes, as long as student and prof. aren't in the same dept.
26%

I don't care, to each their own
17%

To participate in the poll, register online @

thenewsargus.com

A look back: Division II not an option

Unless you've been under a rock, it's easy to see that Winston-Salem State's athletic department is struggling.

Just go to a home basketball game, any home basketball game other than the one against North Carolina A&T, and take a look at all the empty seats.

Or pick up the Winston-Salem Journal, and read about how the department will end up \$1.5 million in the red.

Or look at the firing of Dr. Percy "Chico" Caldwell, the now former athletic director.

The athletic department was dealt another blow on Feb. 13 when the UNC Board of Governors voted against a proposed 31.3 percent increase in student athletic fees to help cover the cost of jumping to Division I.

Given the current financial struggles, some people have expressed the opinion that the school should just cut its losses and move back to Division II. Some have expressed a desire to return to the CIAA.

Moving back down to Division II would be a huge mistake.

Let's face the facts; the jump to Division I was a hastily made move at best. The decision was announced in 2004.

The school was rapidly growing, receiving accolades from national publications, and guided by a highly popular and charismatic chancellor, Harold L. Martin.

The school as a whole was stepping up to another, unprecedented level, so it is understandable that the athletic department would want to fall in line.

As the saying goes, hindsight is 20/20.

WSSU is three years into a now five-year transition from

Division II to Division I. And while the athletic department is struggling to stay afloat financially, it is much too late to turn back.

If WSSU were to go back to Division II, it would be embarrassing. Whenever WSSU athletics are discussed, the first thing people will think: "Oh, you mean that school that tried to go to Division I?"

The embarrassment alone would probably keep the school from ever attempting the move again.

From a sports fan's point of view, the jump back would be a step back in terms of the athletes the school recruits and the competition it faces.

Being in Division I separates us from schools like Fayetteville State and Johnson C. Smith when it comes to the caliber of athletes a program recruits. It also keeps us competitive with N.C. A&T and N.C. Central.

NCCU is also moving to Division I. Stepping back would place us firmly behind our fiercest rivals and relegate us to "Little Brother" status.

As far as competition goes, after facing teams like Hampton, S.C. State and Florida A&M, it's hard to get excited about going back to facing Livingstone and Elizabeth City State.

The change in leadership in the athletic department was a needed one.

Money is not being raised, programs are becoming stagnant, and a new direction is needed.

The University just needs to be sure the step isn't a backwards one.

Reprinted from Feb. 25, 2009
Stephen Gaither
Argus Sports Editor
2008-2009

The best option: Going back to Division II

"Moving Back to Division II will be a huge mistake."

Those were words my predecessor Steven Gaither used to describe our return to the CIAA in our Feb. 25, 2009 issue.

I'm sorry Steven, but I don't agree.

Mr. Gaither, a 2009 WSSU graduate, is not the only person who has expressed those feelings at the "return."

I have heard students make similar comments.

As for WSSU falling behind our biggest rivals, N.C. Central and N.C. A&T that is a moot point. The Rams were victorious against both teams.

Gaither also said that as our competition level dropped, so will our chance to recruit on the same level as N.C. A&T and NCCU, another false prediction.

The Rams had one of the most successful recruiting classes this past season, with wide receiver Tehvyn Brantley winning CIAA offensive rookie of the year.

When we were attempting to go Division I, we couldn't even get an honorable mention for a post-season award.

Another concern Gaither expressed was that the University needs to be sure the step isn't a backwards one.

I think what he meant was by WSSU going back to Division II, we could get left behind by our closest competition because we are not competing on the same level.

In fact, our competition does

not appear to be ready for the teams in their own conference, let alone the competition that WSSU has faced this season.

The Athletic Department struggled raising money in Division I; therefore, the move back to Division II is just what the WSSU athletics needed.

Hiring Bill Hayes to fill the athletic director position made raising money a non-issue.

Everyone knows that with winning comes money and with money comes scholarships and with scholarships comes better players.

Losing in a bigger conference does not help with attendance. It will only continue to hurt the advancement of the department.

As far as the competition goes, I know we were facing teams like Hampton and S.C. State it will be hard to imagine going back to the Virginia State's and Livingstone's. I look at it like this: CIAA teams carry more of a history with rivalries and we can always schedule NCCU and N.C. A&T for our non-conference games. That way we can keep the rivalry games that the students have come to love attending and learn more about those they did not know about.

The next time the Rams want to make a move to Division I, let's just be better prepared so they do not embarrass themselves AGAIN!

Jordan Holloway
Sports Reporter

Weigh in on the argument:
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