

ASU Convenes Feasibility Study Committee

Written by Mike Flynn
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As part of the athletics feasibility study that began last September, Appalachian State University has convened a 10-member committee that will ultimately make a recommendation regarding the University's future in the changing NCAA Division I landscape.

The athletics feasibility study committee held its first meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 18.

The feasibility study committee is charged with analyzing data collected by Collegiate Consulting LLC (formerly NACDA Consulting), developing a final report based on the analysis and making a recommendation to ASU Chancellor Dr. Kenneth E. Peacock. The recommendation is expected to be presented to Chancellor Peacock this summer. The Chancellor will then make his own recommendation to ASU's Board of Trustees, who must approve any change in Appalachian's conference or football subdivision affiliations.

A member of NCAA Division I since 1971, the Mountaineers currently participate the Southern Conference. In football, ASU and the SoCon compete in the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS — formerly Division I-AA).

Tuesday's initial meeting served as an orientation session for the athletics feasibility study committee. As part of the orientation, the committee was provided with an update from Collegiate Consulting representatives, who are in the process of conducting the feasibility study they began on Appalachian's behalf last September.

The feasibility study committee is co-chaired by G.A. Sywassink, Chairman and retired CEO of Standard Holding Corporation, and Larry Stone, President and COO of Lowe's Corporation. Other members include John Blackburn (President, Linville Resorts, Inc.), Mark Harrill (President, Foscoe Companies), Jay Howard (President, JHE Production Group), Derek Jenkins (Senior Vice President, Target Stores), Doug Johnson (CEO, Blue Ridge Energies), Jeffrey A. Shepard (Retired CEO, Footstar), Tommy Sofield (CEO, U.S. Buildings) and Brad Wilson (CEO, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of North Carolina).

The committee is expected to receive additional updates from Collegiate Consulting representatives several times over the coming months. Additionally, as part of the study, critical

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stakeholder groups, including the ASU Board of Trustees, Yosef Club Board of Directors and University, student, community and business leaders will be engaged in the process during the next several months.