THE WILDCAT WAY

DAEMEN UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Strategic Vision | 2026–2031

MISSION

Create tomorrow's leaders by developing championship-caliber student-athletes today.

VISION

Cultivate high character student-athletes through competitive excellence fostered in the classroom, developed through sport, and practiced in the community.

WE WILL BE

F I E R C E

A NOTE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ATHLETICS

The Wildcat Way 2026–2031 is the product of genuine collaboration. Every pillar of this plan was shaped by working groups of coaches, administrators, alumni, and student-athletes who reviewed what we accomplished together in the previous five years, celebrated our progress, and challenged us to aim higher.

We enter this next chapter as Daemen University — a university with national aspirations and a Division II athletics program that reflects those ambitions. We have built something here in Western New York that is worth competing for, and this plan charts the path forward.

Our mission has not changed: create tomorrow's leaders by developing championship-caliber student-athletes today. Everything in these pages — from facility investments to mental health resources to corporate partnerships — exists in service of that mission.

We will measure our progress, adapt when necessary, and remain committed to the standard we have set. We will be FIERCE.

Go Wildcats!

Traci Murphy
Vice President for Athletics | Daemen University

OUR VALUES

Every decision, action, and commitment within Daemen Athletics is guided by six core values — our FIERCE framework. These values define how we recruit, develop, compete, and serve.

F I E R C E

FEARLESS — Dedication to a Championship Mindset

INTEGRITY — Allegiance to our Wildcat Culture

EFFORT — Progressive Communication Strategies

RESPECT — Cultivate a Wildcat community where every member is welcomed, valued, and belongs

COMMITMENT — Comprehensive Development of Student-Athletes

ENGAGEMENT — Forging an Interconnected Wildcat Community

DAEMEN TENNIS
WILDCATS

FEARLESS

DEDICATION TO A CHAMPIONSHIP MINDSET

Drive a division-wide culture that attracts, develops, and retains exceptional talent — and competes with relentless championship ambition.

1/FEARLESS

OBJECTIVE 1.1 | Attract & Retain Championship-Caliber Student-Athletes

- Elevate recruiting budgets to secure talent that thrives in a high-standard culture
- Track total recruiting spend annually to establish baseline and inform future budget decisions
- Provide incoming coaches with onboarding materials: productive recruiting regions, ideal recruit profiles, and campus success stories
- Design high-impact campus visits that include the FAR, an admissions counselor, a faculty member in the prospect's major, sport supervisor, and potential teammates
- Annually review all Division of Athletics and university-wide support services to confirm mental, physical, and academic needs are being met
- Develop assistant coaches by including them in recruiting when budget permits

OBJECTIVE 1.2 | Attract, Develop & Retain Quality Personnel

- Benchmark and advance full-time coach, support staff, and administrator compensation toward local and national norms
- Provide budget support for head and assistant coaches to join professional and coaching associations
- Deliver an annual in-house professional development series for all coaches and staff
- Continue using national job posting platforms for open positions
- Develop a phased five-year plan to add full-time assistant coaches across most programs

OBJECTIVE 1.3 | Compete Consistently at the Top of the ECC

- Prioritize spending in areas with direct performance impact
- Hire additional support staff as rosters grow
- Ensure all programs — including those not based at Royal Park — have access to quality practice facilities
- Work with ECC leadership on equitable competition scheduling
- Identify 3–5 benchmark peer institutions outside the conference for ongoing comparison
- Evaluate campus van fleet capacity annually as rosters expand

OBJECTIVE 1.4 | Develop an Athletics Facility Master Plan (2026–2031)

- Conduct a comprehensive facility evaluation of all athletics spaces — including Lumsden Gymnasium, offices, auxiliary training areas, and Royal Park — to assess current condition, functionality, and gaps
- Engage coaches, administrators, student-athletes, and campus facilities staff in a structured needs assessment to identify priorities across competitive, support, and operational spaces
- Develop a written Athletics Facility Master Plan that includes short-, mid-, and long-term project priorities, cost estimates, and a phased implementation timeline
- Incorporate the following known areas of need into the planning process
- Continue collaboration with neighboring school districts for facility access as needed during the planning and implementation phases
- Annually review AWC Fitness Center equipment to meet membership needs, independent of the Master Plan cycle
- Maintain a refresh cycle for all branding and banners in Lumsden Gymnasium

OBJECTIVE 1.5 | Enhance Regional & National Competitive Scheduling

- Encourage sport programs to coordinate one high-caliber team trip every three years (out of region tournament, elite competition, recruiting tool, team integration)
- Encourage each head coach to schedule one Division I opponent (scrimmage or exhibition) annually when feasible
- Assist sport programs in developing their fundraising plans to enable scheduling up to NCAA contest maximums and/or adding high-caliber competition/tournament

OBJECTIVE 1.6 | Performance Nutrition & Recovery

- Partner with the contracted sports nutritionist to establish best-practice menus for travel, pre-performance, post-lift, and post-practice recovery
- Continue to work with Dining Services to maximize healthy options
- Build and launch a high-performance student-athlete refueling station
- Develop and distribute a unified nutrition/dining resource guide to all student-athletes

INTEGRITY

ALLEGIANCE TO OUR WILDCAT CULTURE

Uphold and promote a culture of institutional control, fiscal responsibility, and regulatory compliance — setting the accountability standard for Daemen Athletics and the broader campus community.

2/INTEGRITY

OBJECTIVE 2.1 | Comprehensive Compliance Education

- Provide ongoing rules education for coaches and staff, including weekly compliance communications (e.g., Wisdom Wednesday)
- Use monthly staff meetings for NCAA legislative updates and rules education; record sessions for on-demand review
- Require annual completion of NCAA Division II University modules for all coaches and select staff
- Engage SAAC in legislative reviews and promote compliance awareness through social media

OBJECTIVE 2.2 | Campus-Wide Culture of Rules & Institutional Control

- Engage the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) in the compliance education plan and cross-campus dialogue
- Provide annual formal rules education for non-athletic campus divisions via tip sheets and in-person meetings
- Deliver eligibility and academic-rules presentations to faculty in coordination with Deans of each College
- Collaborate with Financial Aid and Student Accounts for proper oversight of athletic aid administration
- Submit application for an NCAA Division II Blueprint Review of our compliance program, with the goal of completing the review within the 2026–2031 strategic plan window

OBJECTIVE 2.3 | Fiscal Responsibility & Long-Term Stability

- Maintain ongoing fiscal responsibility by operating within approved annual budgets
- Provide monthly budget updates to the VP for Athletics; communicate proactively with the VP for Athletics and appropriate area head on any projected overages
- Project and forecast revenues and expenses to support long-term financial stability
- Use historical data and benchmarking tools for effective resource management; identify cost-saving opportunities
- Utilize the NCAA Institution Performance Program (IPP) to benchmark key budget expenses against ECC peers and comparable Division II institutions, informing resource allocation and long-term financial planning

OBJECTIVE 2.4 | Policy & Conference Alignment

- Annually review Division of Athletics policies, procedures, and the institutional strategic plan to ensure alignment
- Adhere to all institutional, NCAA, East Coast Conference, Northeast Conference, and PSAC policies and procedures

OBJECTIVE 2.5 | Technology for Monitoring & Compliance

- Conduct annual review and refinement of Spry Workflow systems across all operational units
- Athletic Communications to annually audit all public-facing competition and student-athlete information for completion, accuracy, and accessibility
- Effectively track all Countable Athletic Related Activities (CARA)
- Annually review website content for alignment with current NCAA legislation

EFFORT

PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Educate and promote the Wildcat Athletics brand in a cohesive, compelling way — fostering meaningful interaction and engagement with all stakeholders and constituents.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 | Internal Communication

- Continue to evaluate and manage workflows through Spry software
- Hold monthly all-staff division meetings covering NCAA updates, conference information, compliance education, and professional development; invite FAR and campus guest presenters
- Ensure all staff have active daemen.edu email accounts, accurate contact directories, and functioning Dialpad connections or confirm accurate alternate contact information
- Conduct pre-season and end-of-season compliance meetings with all student-athletes
- Develop and implement a consistent post-season survey process with separate instruments for graduating seniors and returning student-athletes, capturing feedback on their overall experience, support services, and program quality

OBJECTIVE 3.2 | Brand Consistency & Awareness

- Update and redistribute written branding and logo usage guidelines to all staff; conduct periodic refreshers to ensure consistent application across all platforms and communications
- Further promote the 'WNY's Premier Division II Program' tagline across all platforms
- Partner with head coaches to build their individual coaching brands on social media, amplifying the Daemen Athletics presence
- Grow and monitor FloCollege web streaming viewership as a key measure of audience reach, brand visibility, and fan engagement beyond the immediate campus community

OBJECTIVE 3.3 | Alumni Network & Donor Relations

- Further develop the Wildcat Athletic Association (WAA) with pre-selected alumni to identify methods, activities, and events that will continue to attract and sustain alumni engagement
- Maintain Hall of Fame nomination procedures, voting, and induction event as a flagship alumni engagement touchpoint
- Develop a centralized alumni/donor relations philosophy in collaboration with the WAA that coaches and administrators can align with in their individual outreach efforts
- Assist head coaches in identifying an alumni ambassador or class representatives to develop and maintain ongoing connection with Daemen Athletics and support the Daemen Day of Giving
- Host an annual cross-athletics alumni and donor event; build upon individual team alumni events
- Continue to strengthen collaboration between the Division of Athletics and Institutional Advancement to align efforts and avoid duplication

RESPECT

CULTIVATE A WILDCAT COMMUNITY WHERE EVERY MEMBER IS WELCOMED, VALUED, AND BELONGS

Every Wildcat — student-athlete, coach, staff member, stakeholder and community member — has a place here and an equal opportunity to contribute, compete, and grow.

4/RESPECT

OBJECTIVE 4.1 | Hiring, Recruitment & Retention

- Actively use best practices to support a broad and welcoming candidate pool in coaching and staff searches
- Integrate these principles into SAAC programming and the Wildcats Will LEAD Athletics Leadership Academy

OBJECTIVE 4.2 | Education & Awareness

- Create opportunities for student-athletes and staff to serve on campus-wide committees, broadening perspectives and strengthening campus connections
- Establish a structured educational process on awareness, belonging, and community for all coaches, staff, and student-athletes
- Require annual completion of Safe Colleges Training (Implicit Bias and Microaggression Awareness) for all staff
- Participate in campus events and annual Vector Trainings on harassment, sexual misconduct, bias, and violence prevention
- Promote student-athlete profiles that celebrate individual stories, backgrounds, and achievements
- Collaborate with the Hope Center; encourage student-athlete participation in the annual HOPE Summit

OBJECTIVE 4.3 | Annual Culture & Belonging Assessment

- Monitor and act on student-athlete feedback related to belonging and culture — including the belonging and concern questions embedded in the annual post-season survey — to identify trends, address issues, and inform ongoing planning
- Track and report on culture and belonging indicators each semester, using findings to guide programming, staff education, and division-wide conversations

DAEMEN WILDCATS

COMMITMENT

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

Deliver a student-centered experience that develops the whole person — academically, personally, and physically — preparing every Wildcat for a successful life beyond sport.

5/COMMITMENT

OBJECTIVE 5.1 | Academic Success & Achievement

- Graduate student-athletes at a Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) that meets or exceeds the general student population, and maintain NCAA Division II Academic Success Rates (SR) that reflect our commitment to degree completion
- Annual FGR comparison — student-athletes vs. general student population
- Manage individualized graduation plans aligned to each student-athlete's eligibility timeline
- Provide tiered academic support services matched to individual needs; advance partnerships with the Student Success Center
- Conduct annual reviews of study hall, study table, and missed-class-time policies
- Promote academic achievements through DaemenWildcats.com and social media platforms
- Encourage use of academic coaches (tutors) and promote the campus CARE system for multi-divisional intervention

OBJECTIVE 5.2 | Leadership & Career Development

- Expand Wildcats Will LEAD (Athletics Leadership Academy) programming with structured growth opportunities
- Continue access to NCAA Sport Science Institute MyPlaybook for all first-year student-athletes enrolled in MGT 101
- Develop a career readiness program covering professional identity, internships, and life-after-sport transitions
- Annually nominate student-athletes for ECC Excellence in Character, ECC Leadership Forum, NCAA Career in Sports Forum, and NCAA Leadership Forum

OBJECTIVE 5.3 | Community Service & Civic Engagement

- Support on-campus community service opportunities (CARE Cupboard, campus events, move-in weekend, etc.)
- Encourage voter registration and civic participation through the Get Civically Fit program
- Participate in conference and sport-specific awareness initiatives (Dig Pink, Coaches vs. Cancer, Play4Kay, Morgan's Message, etc.)

OBJECTIVE 5.4 | Physical & Mental Health and Well-Being

- Maintain Sports Medicine staffing at levels that support model preventative and rehabilitative care for all programs
- Provide timely access to team physicians; annually review and update Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) at all venues
- Deliver monthly health and safety educational updates to coaching staff
- Educate student-athletes on NCAA and institutional drug testing, banned substances, and supplement risks
- Implement sport-specific athlete performance tracking and outcome measurement to evaluate and strengthen Sports Performance services
- Improve data sharing between Sports Performance staff and coaches to inform training decisions, best practices, and identify additional resource needs
- Advance sports nutrition consultation: establish on-campus office hours, virtual sessions, and a student-athlete refueling station
- Promote on-campus mental health resources (CHIP Center counselors, mental performance coaching, S.A.G.E. sessions); refer to off-campus resources as needed

ENGAGEMENT

FORGING AN INTERCONNECTED WILDCAT COMMUNITY

Deliver a student-centered experience that develops the whole person — academically, personally, and physically — preparing every Wildcat for a successful life beyond sport.

6/ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 6.1 | Fan Engagement, Attendance & Traditions

- Increase community awareness of events via advertising, social media, digital signage, tabling, and campus announcements
- Grow outreach to local youth leagues, camps, and clinics
- Coordinate with Student Affairs and Student Government to co-sponsor transportation to off-campus events
- Elevate game-day experience: giveaways (t-shirts, mini balls), on-court fan activities, and a loyalty/rewards program
- Explore the feasibility of a dedicated student section, balancing student engagement goals with ticket revenue considerations
- Dedicate events honoring specific campus groups (Faculty Appreciation Night, Visual & Performing Arts Day, Facilities Weekend, etc.)
- Collaborate with Student Activities to enhance attendance at home athletic events
- Track average event attendance — annual % change by sport
- Develop a marketing internship opportunity to support community engagement, concession and ticket promotions, and halftime crowd engagement programming
- Develop engagement opportunities for neighborhoods and businesses surrounding Royal Park

OBJECTIVE 6.2 | Alumni Engagement

- Collaborate with Alumni Relations to develop and deepen relationships with athletics alumni
- Support a career mentorship program connecting alumni with current student-athletes (see also Objective 5.2 — Leadership & Career Development)
- Relaunch Paw Prints — a division-wide athletics newsletter distributed to all alumni every other month, featuring program updates, student-athlete spotlights, and inside perspectives from coaches
- Continue growing the Athletics Hall of Fame ceremony as a flagship alumni engagement event
- Develop a 'Where Are They Now' alumni feature for the website and social channels

- Evaluate the feasibility of a Wildcat Athletics Golf Outing as a signature fundraising and engagement event
- Identify and establish an annual donor cultivation event that recognizes and deepens relationships with current and prospective Athletics supporters

OBJECTIVE 6.3 | Campus Experience & Recreation

- Maintain student-athlete involvement and leadership in community service and university-wide events
- Collaborate with organizations and departments university-wide to create synergies supporting recreation and wellness programming for all students, faculty, and staff
- Integrate recreational activities into already existing campus events and programming
- Develop student leadership opportunities within recreation and intramural program-ming to increase peer-to-peer engagement and enhance motivation to participate
- Utilize technology to develop on-demand recreational opportunities and expand participation across the campus community
- Develop incentive programs to encourage community-wide participation in recreation, intramurals, and club sport activities
- Utilize off-campus locations to diversify and expand recreational offerings

OBJECTIVE 6.4 | Corporate Partnership

- Plan corporate partner game days with tickets and hospitality experiences
- Maximize Athletics exposure through partner signage, co-branding, newsletters, emails, and social media
- Encourage partners to offer discounts to Daemen students, faculty, and staff

OBJECTIVE 6.5 | Philanthropic Culture

- Enhance Giving Day impact by involving student-athletes in phone calls, thank-a-thon notes, and social media outreach
- Strengthen and promote the Wildcat Athletic Association as the central giving vehicle
- Leverage the Athletics Hall of Fame event to increase philanthropic engagement

THE WILDCAT WAY

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WILDCATS