

Dickinson College Reinstates Men's Squash Team Four Months After Reinstating Women's Squash Team to Avoid Title IX Lawsuit

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Dickinson College Interim President John E. Jones III announced late yesterday that the school was reinstating its men's squash team to varsity status and continuing it going forward. On August 26, 2022, Dickinson said it was eliminating both its men's and women's squash teams at the end of the 2021-22 academic year. But the women's teams members threatened to file a Title IX sex discrimination class action and, on October 6, 2021, Dickinson agreed to reinstate the women's team, develop a gender equity plan, and come into full compliance with Title IX. Now, as the women's team members urged, Dickinson is reinstating its men's team, too.

"This is a huge victory for the women's squash team members, the men's squash team members, and all of their parents and supporters," said Arthur H. Bryant of Bailey Glasser's office in Oakland, CA, lead counsel for the female student-athletes. "They all made clear from the start that they wanted Dickinson to reinstate both teams, comply with Title IX, and achieve gender equity. Now, that's what Dickinson will do. We truly appreciate President Jones's leadership in making this happen."

Last night, President Jones met with the student-athletes about their teams' treatment, shared the good news, and then sent an email "To the Dickinson Community," included below, announcing the men's team's reinstatement. It says, "New college presidents sometimes forge ahead with plans without having the necessary feel for all the facts and may fail to consider viable alternatives. That was certainly the case here. I deeply regret the disappointment and frustration this caused team members and their families. I offer my sincere apologies...and I thank the dedicated parents who advocated on behalf of their athletes."

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The reinstatement of the men's squash team comes four months after Dickinson's agreement to reinstate the women's squash team. The press release announcing that agreement noted, "The women's squash team members urged Dickinson to reinstate the men's squash team, too, but, up to now, the school has not been willing to do so. To ensure that it can, the agreement provides that the women's squash team members 'waive any legal claims that would arise out of the men's squash team's reinstatement.' The women will continue to fight for the men's team's reinstatement, too."

Women's squash team co-captain Courtney Trail, said, "We are grateful for President Jones's decision to reinstate the men's squash team, his apology, and his commitment to leading us forward together. We are sorry we all had to go through this, but thrilled that the women's and men's squash teams will continue, Dickinson will comply with Title IX, and the sex discrimination in the athletic program will end."

The women squash team members who successfully fought for their rights are Amna Fayyaz, Jocelyn Feliciano, Whitney Finney, Ellissa (Ella) Goldman, Elizabeth Howerton, Lindsay Kuracina, Doxey Loupassi, Cate Moll, Eloise Nimoityn, Rachel O'Brien, Anna O'Connor, Emerson Rains, Courtney Trail, and Katelynn Young.

In addition to Bryant, the lawyers for the female student-athletes are Bailey Glasser attorneys Cary Joshi in Washington, DC; Lori Bullock in Des Moines, Iowa; and Jade Smith-Williams in Oakland, CA.

To the Dickinson Community:

Last summer, we announced a plan to move men's and women's squash to club sport status following the 2021-22 academic year. After Title IX considerations were raised, we agreed to maintain the varsity status of the women's squash team going forward. An external reviewer is examining our athletics program under the lens of Title IX regulations. That report is expected in August, and we will review it and take appropriate steps.

Since those developments, we have continued to discuss this issue and consider our options. To be fair to the dedicated athletes involved, I have decided to reinstate the men's team to varsity status as well. Going forward, both men and women will continue to compete as varsity teams.

While many details are still being worked out, I can tell you that we will search for a squash coach—one who will serve both teams.

One of the reasons we had decided to move to club status was the cost of competition for the teams. Since the Centennial Conference does not recognize squash as a varsity sport, our athletes were often required to travel great distances for matches. We believe that economies can be found through regional tournaments involving multiple teams, and we look forward to working with a

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new coach to chart a more sustainable path for our varsity squash program.

I met with the teams this evening to share this information. New college presidents sometimes forge ahead with plans without having the necessary feel for all the facts and may fail to consider viable alternatives. That was certainly the case here. I deeply regret the disappointment and frustration this caused team members and their families. I offer my sincere apologies, and I appreciate the continuing dialogue. I wish our squash athletes continued success in their season, and I thank the dedicated parents who advocated on behalf of their athletes.

Sincerely,

John E. Jones III '77, P'11
Interim President

Attorneys

Arthur H. Bryant
Lori A. Bullock
Cary Joshi
Jade Smith-Williams

Practice Areas

Title IX