

Husky Stadium

community resource and
public asset for everyone



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON



Husky

“Every citizen of Washington should be proud to know that the greatest stadium in the world will be built on the campus of our own State University. Generations of Washingtonians will visit it at its beautiful and permanent home on the shores of Lake Washington. They will see it for what it is— an imperishable monument to the friendship and generous support which the people of this commonwealth have always accorded their University.”

Associated Students of the University of Washington, 1920



Stadium

community resource and public asset

For close to a century, Husky Stadium has served as a community resource and an important symbol of the State of Washington's commitment to higher education. It is a regional landmark, home to historic football victories and also the host of more than 55 community events involving more than 88,000 people every year, including over 600,000 Husky football fans. Through the decades, the UW and the local community have reinforced Husky Stadium's identity as a public facility serving a public purpose, rejecting offers to lease it out permanently for professional football or other sports. UW students, alumni, and other citizens have provided important financial support over the years that has expanded the Stadium's capacity and preserved its structural integrity without having to draw upon public funds. Financing the stadium has never been easy—the student fundraising drive for the \$300,000 needed to build it in 1920 was \$100,000 in debt on the stadium's opening day. But through the years, the people of this state have recognized and appreciated the value of Husky Stadium as a community resource and public asset that is uniquely Washington. Through this partnership, Husky Stadium has grown and thrived, becoming an important part of our state's history.

Today, this unique public asset is in crisis. It needs comprehensive renovations in order to continue as a working facility for the University and the community, and these renovations come with a high price tag. Preservation, renovation, and maintenance action must be taken very soon to replace 90-year-old seating and insure a higher level of safety, provide required seismic reinforcements, and increase access for citizens with disabilities. While this is going on, it makes economic sense to complete the upgrades that will turn Husky Stadium into a truly competitive modern football facility for spectators and student-athletes. The urgency and nature of these improvements call for a renewed public-private commitment to ensure that the stadium will be able to continue to serve its community and its State.

At least 20% of the state's population follow the Huskies—
with over 1.3 million people watching Husky Football on TV
or listening on radio.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

A PUBLIC-PRIVATE

Partners

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY PROPOSING?

To cover the estimated \$300 million cost of the project, the UW is suggesting an equal mix of private and public funding, using existing revenue streams rather than requiring new appropriations or taxes. This is the first time in Husky Stadium's history that public funds would be used toward construction and renovation. The University feels strongly that the people of Washington should not pay the full cost of these renovations, but feels just as strongly that a renovation supported in part by public investment will best serve the historic mission and community purpose of Husky Stadium. Instead, the UW is proposing an even split between public and private funding. Using the existing revenue streams already identified by the State Legislature as a financing mechanism for regional sports stadiums, \$150 million in public funds would support the critical life safety, health, accessibility and seismic renovations. The UW would then raise private funds and add more premium seating to finance the \$150 million needed for upgrades and improvements to the fan experience and help in the recruitment of top coaches and players. The public support requested is half the sum provided for Qwest Field and less than half of that provided for Safeco Field. Financing would not require new expenditures or new taxes, but would redirect existing revenues that the voters and the legislature have previously directed to construct sports facilities. There is precedent in the State of Washington for this kind of public investment in university and community sports facilities. State appropriations have paid for renovations and construction of sports facilities at Washington State University, Central Washington University, Western Washington University, and North Seattle Community College, as well as community sports facilities from Tacoma to Spokane, Sumas to the Tri-Cities.

WHY ARE RENOVATIONS NECESSARY NOW?

Like any older piece of public infrastructure, Husky Stadium has reached an age where renovation has become critical to public safety as well as economic efficiency. Escalating construction costs and necessary seismic retrofits make this a more expensive proposition than past renovations. Yet doing nothing has a significant cost. Simple maintenance of this aging structure could be as much as \$85-100 million over the next ten years—money that will have to be redirected away from support of student-athletes and team programs. Delaying these renovations indefinitely not only will make Husky Stadium a less competitive facility for college football, but it also could ultimately cost more than doing the renovations in the first place.

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Husky Stadium Cost Detail Assumes construction begins following the 2009 Season

PROJECT COMPONENTS	TOTAL COST
PUBLIC FUNDING*	
Replace lower bowl and west concourse (safety, seismic, ADA, code)	\$77,300,000
Site and utility upgrades	\$9,600,000
Install (11) new elevators north, south, west (ADA, code)	\$5,000,000
Media and communications level (code)	\$6,000,000
Seismic upgrade for south upper stands substructure	\$12,800,000
Update south main concourse, restrooms and concessions (ADA, code)	\$16,100,000
Update south upper concourse, restrooms and concessions (ADA, code)	\$9,600,000
Update north main concourse, restrooms and concessions (ADA, code)	\$13,600,000
Subtotal	\$150,000,000
PRIVATE FUNDING**	
Lower bowl renovations	\$11,500,000
Install premium seating (clubs, loges)	\$6,500,000
Construct new premium seating club room	\$19,800,000
Sound system upgrades	\$4,700,000
Refurbish media and communications level (non code items)	\$2,000,000
Provide service and support space under west and south bowl	\$32,000,000
Restrooms and concessions (non ADA)	\$23,500,000
Football operations and support facility	\$50,000,000
Subtotal	\$150,000,000
TOTAL COSTS	\$300,000,000

* Public funds support the critical life safety, health, accessibility and seismic renovations.
 ** Private funds support upgrades and improvements to the fan experience.

WHY CAN'T THIS BE PAID WITH ATHLETIC REVENUES

OR OTHER PARTS OF THE UW BUDGET?

Today's UW is the result of generations of strong partnerships and strategic public and private investments in higher education. In return for these investments, the UW provides an excellent education for our students, world-class health care for our patients, and research activity that fuels the Washington economy and improves its citizens' quality of life. New investment in Husky Stadium is essential to its future, but this investment should not be made at the expense of these other critical teaching, research and health care services that UW must deliver to the people of Washington.

Today, the UW athletic programs are self-supporting, funded by gate revenue, corporate sponsorships, and private donations. **This is exceptional; only 17 of the 300 NCAA Division I sports programs in the country today net a profit, with most drawing on university budgets and public tax dollars for some if not most of their operating expenditures.**

Altering this self-sufficiency by shifting state appropriations from the core university budget to Husky Stadium renovations would be particularly detrimental, as these state investments are one of the two primary sources of support for academics at the UW. The other source, student tuition, is also the wrong place to look for stadium renovation funds. UW alumni and other citizens of Washington recognize how much having a world-class football facility contributes to making this campus an exciting place, and recognize its role in creating lifetime loyalties to public higher education in this state. But people also understand that teaching and research are the most important things this university does. Diverting funds from these core activities to pay for stadium renovations won't work for UW students, or for Washington citizens.

UW 2006–2007 Profit (Loss) for Intercollegiate Athletics*

UW SPORT	PROFIT (LOSS)
Football	\$17,082,334
Basketball, MEN'S	\$4,114,964
All other UW Sport Programs	(\$16,553,274)
TOTAL	\$4,644,024

* Any surplus revenue is reinvested into minor capital projects debt service and unforeseen department expenses.

WHY NOT USE THE FUNDS RAISED BY CAMPAIGN UW?

The tremendous success of UW's recently completed fundraising campaign attests to Washingtonians' commitment to providing students with an outstanding educational experience. Gifts large and small from nearly 300,000 donors have raised a total of nearly \$2.7 billion since 2000. However, 99% of the pledged funds are intended by their donors to go to support specific **educational** functions, or have been banked for future educational use in an endowment. Campaign UW funds are going towards initiatives like the Students First scholarship, which allows students to focus more on their academic goals and less on how to pay for school. They are supporting research programs like the Department of Global Health and the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation that are making the State of Washington one of the world's capitals of innovation. Redirecting any of these funds to Husky Stadium renovations would take money away from these kinds of initiatives and go against the wishes of the thousands of people who contributed to the campaign.

WHY IS A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

First, Husky Stadium’s strength as a community resource and public asset derives in good part from its accessibility both to UW football fans and to the numerous community groups, schools, and nonprofit organizations that hold over 55 events per year in the stadium (as well as close to 1100 additional events in other UW athletic facilities). These traditions might be harder to maintain with a financing package that comes entirely from private sources. Lacking public investment, other schools have used 100%-private financing for stadium construction and renovations, but in return they have had to make concessions, making these great public spaces a little less public than before. The UW believes that a public-private investment in Husky Stadium’s renovation is in keeping with these traditions and will be the most effective way to ensure continued community use of and access to the facility.

Second, it is important to put the total cost of the renovation project in context. Husky athletics have the best fans in the United States and an extremely generous base of donors. Over the past decade, the UW has been fortunate to receive almost \$80 million in financial support for a variety of construction projects including a completely renovated basketball/volleyball and gymnastics arena, an indoor practice facility, crewhouse/academic support/dining hall facility, improvements to baseball and soccer facilities and the Husky Legends Center. Over the past few years, athletic supporters have doubled the number of permanent scholarship endowments established for both men’s and women’s athletic programs. **The department now has 134 scholarships endowed. The \$150 million private fundraising goal for Husky Stadium is more than 50% “greater” than the total amount contributed by Husky donors during the last 10 years for both capital and operating support.** It’s an ambitious undertaking but one that the University believes can be successful. However, raising the entire \$300 million total project budget through private sources is simply not feasible.

Capital Project Expenses for UW Athletics (1997–2008)* In Millions

PROJECT	COST
Bank of America Arena Renovation	\$47.1
Indoor Practice Facility and East Practice Field Construction	\$28.9
Crewhouse Renovation	\$16.3
Football Enhancement/Legends Center Upgrade	\$6.2
Basketball and Volleyball Locker and Team Rooms Upgrade	\$1.3
Don James Center Upgrade	\$0.5
TOTAL	\$100.3

* During this time period, over \$80 million was raised from private donor contributions for capital projects.

A COMMUNITY

Resource

WHY DOES HUSKY STADIUM MATTER TO THIS REGION AND THIS STATE?

Strong college athletic programs and facilities are a vital regional amenity. States and regions thrive on “the three E’s”: education, entrepreneurship, and environment. Environment, in this context, means not only the quality of natural resources but much broader quality-of-life measures. In a competitive global economy, a mobile workforce is attracted not only by good jobs but by local amenities that, in the case of this region and state, include a major college football stadium in a spectacular setting on the shores of Lake Washington. Generations of Washingtonians have celebrated Husky Stadium as a local landmark and as a community gathering point. Its location and amenities are “uniquely Washington”; no other state or region has a university facility where fans can arrive by boat and view spectacular mountain vistas from its stands. In a rapidly changing world, many people can choose to move almost anywhere. Unique local assets like Husky Stadium attract them and keep them in one place.

WHAT WAS THE PAST ROLE OF HUSKY STADIUM IN THE COMMUNITY?

From the beginning, Washingtonians have celebrated Husky Stadium as a unique facility that reflected the public-minded, entrepreneurial spirit of this state and region. In 1920, recognizing that the Huskies’ home turf, Denny Field, was far too small and ill-equipped for the popular team, the Associated Students of the University of Washington embarked on a rapid fundraising drive to build a new stadium. Within a few months, they had raised enough to build the original Husky Stadium – the same lower bowl that is so badly in need of repair today. The first game was played on Thanksgiving Day 1920, against Dartmouth. Supporters and outside observers viewed the stadium as not only a university facility, but a civic one as well. “The famous Seattle Spirit, which has played such a prominent part in the rapid growth of this city, was again in evidence in the financing and actual construction work on the stadium,” wrote one journalist as he recounted the stadium’s opening day. “By fortune of location, this means that Seattle practically gains a civic stadium when the University builds one,” argued University leaders. “For this reason, the citizens of the community should do everything possible to assist the students in completing their project, for under their plan Seattle practically gets a stadium for its own civic uses. Seattle should not miss the opportunity to contribute to this project, which incidentally gives it a great civic gathering place.”

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Each year, the UW Alumni Association Dawg Dash raises at least \$10,000 for scholarships for UW students.

Husky Stadium and Don James Center 2007-08 Events

EVENTS	ATTENDANCE
Sports Camps and Clinics EXAMPLES OF CAMPS AND CLINICS INCLUDE → Husky Football Individual Camp; Washington Soccer School Camp; Run to Win Sports Camp; Great NW Lacrosse Elite 80 Camp	3,200
Charity Runs/Walks/Receptions EXAMPLES OF CHARITY EVENTS INCLUDE → Nordstrom Beat the Bridge; Multiple Sclerosis Society MS Walk; UW Alumni Association Dawg Dash; American Cancer Society Relay for Life	20,100
UW Uses (non football) EXAMPLES OF UW EVENTS INCLUDE → UW Commencement; Delta Upsilon Founder's Day Dinner; UW Alumni Association Jump Start; UW ROTC training	59,350
Other Community/Regional Uses EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY USES INCLUDES → Seattle Seahawks Open Practice; Friends of Hoop MLK Hoopfest Dinner; Roosevelt High School Sports Auction; Seattle Stallions Football Team Practice	6,000
TOTAL COMMUNITY ATTENDANCE	88,650

HOW HAS HUSKY STADIUM'S PUBLIC MISSION BEEN SUPPORTED?

Over the decades, Husky Stadium expanded its capacity and added the risers that turned it into the unique landmark it is today. University and state leaders continued to consider the facility a community asset as well as an educational one. This became clear in the late 1950s and again in the 1960s, when Seattle-area promoters asked to lease the stadium for professional boxing matches and for a possible professional football franchise. With no professional stadium in the area, Husky Stadium was the only place with the facilities and capacity for these teams. Although the leases would have been highly lucrative, the UW President and Board of Regents turned down these offers, and people around the state applauded their decision. If the UW had voted to allow professional football teams to play there, wrote the Spokane Spokesman-Review in a 1959 editorial, "Its ability to serve the state and its people in its essential teaching and research functions would no doubt be badly damaged. The University of Washington and its supporting public throughout the state can take pride in this maintenance of educational integrity."

The UW athletic facilities surrounding the stadium also host hundreds of community events and thousands of community members every year—involving over 300,000 participants in all.

The American Cancer Society Relay for Life promotes survivorship and increases cancer awareness in our community.





Photo by Rob Jones III

WHAT DOES HUSKY STADIUM DO FOR THE COMMUNITY TODAY?

Today, Husky Stadium is the fifth-oldest NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division IA) stadium in America and the 15th-largest college football stadium in the nation, with a 72,500-fan capacity. It is a major gathering point in our State. With 2007 public tickets as low as \$35 and student tickets at \$25, Husky Football is affordable and accessible for most Washingtonians. Every year the stadium is home to six or seven Husky Football games, but it also hosts more than 88,000 Washingtonians who participate in over 55 community events at the Stadium and its East Field. The UW athletic facilities surrounding the stadium also host hundreds of community events and thousands of community members every year—involving over 300,000 participants in all. The size, location, and accessibility of Husky Stadium and the other UW facilities set them apart from places like Safeco Field and Qwest Field. Hosting community events isn't just an afterthought for the UW athletic facilities; it is one of their core values and functions. By bringing the community to Husky Stadium, the UW gives back to the people of Washington, reinforces its public mission, and strengthens its ties to its neighborhood, its region, and its State.

Photo by Derek Cabellon



A PUBLIC

Asset

AREN'T UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUMS AND PRO STADIUMS JUST ALIKE?

Not at all. Recent discussions about public financing for university athletic facilities, in the State of Washington and around the country, tend to group these stadiums either with facilities for professional sports franchises, or other public infrastructure projects like roads and bridges. In an era of tightened state budgets and public resistance to professional stadium financing, this has complicated public understanding of the needs for and benefits of university stadium restoration and improvement.

University and professional sports programs are not the same thing, and there should be a distinct and different public rationale for funding each kind of facility. University stadiums are public facilities in ways that other stadiums are not. They host more community events than varsity games, they serve as practice and development facilities for students, and average ticket prices are far more accessible to the general public. Professional sports, as private enterprises, should provide a reasonable return on investment in order to merit public financing. Holding collegiate facilities to the same standard perpetuates the assumption that college sports are little different from pro teams, a presumption that does disservice to the broader spectrum of student sports and downgrades the teams' significant role in building vibrant campus and alumni communities.

WHY NOT PLAY AT QWEST FIELD?

Four decades ago, some people were arguing that Husky Stadium should be home to the region's first professional football team. Today, some argue that the UW Huskies should abandon their on-campus home and play at Qwest Field, already the home of the Seattle Seahawks and Seattle Sounders. There are a number of reasons that this is a flawed idea for the University and for the people of Washington. First, moving to professional facilities costs college athletics programs and their fans more money. UW would have increased expenses, lost revenues, and Husky fans would have to pay more for tickets, parking and concessions. Second, college teams have lower priority in scheduling than the pro franchises that are these facilities' main tenants. The Husky season will have to adjust to meet the demands of the NFL and the Seahawks, the new Seattle Sounders major league soccer team, and other for-profit enterprises using Qwest Field and nearby facilities. Third, the irreplaceable experience of college game day at Husky Stadium will be lost. Arriving by boat, walking over from campus dormitories, celebrating tailgating traditions—all will be changed or lost with a move to Qwest Field. Other schools that have moved teams to off-campus facilities have seen student attendance and support diminish significantly. We cannot put a dollar amount on this cost, but we can expect that such a change will diminish attendance, lessen alumni support and donations, and weaken community ties to the UW and its sports programs. University athletics are under the umbrella of the broader academic programs and mission of the university. Moving these games from campus to a professional facility would weaken these ties and send the wrong message about the interconnectedness of athletics and academics.

UW would have increased expenses, lost revenues, and Husky fans would have to pay more for tickets, parking and concessions.

Summary of Proposed Husky Stadium Financing

Total Project Cost	\$300 million
UW Private Contribution	\$150 million*
Revenues from increased donor seats and premium/club seating	\$90 million
Donations (in addition to \$80 million in donor contributions which have been contributed since 1997)	\$60 million
Proposed Public Contribution	\$150 million
0.5% KING COUNTY FOOD AND BEVERAGE TAX This tax is currently used to pay Safeco Field bonds.	\$65 million
2% CAR RENTAL TAX This tax is currently being used to pay Safeco Field bonds.	\$15 million
1% CAR RENTAL TAX Currently, 75% of the proceeds are directed to Kingdome bonds and 25% to youth sports activities and facilities.	\$13 million
2% HOTEL/MOTEL TAX This tax is currently being used for the Kingdome and Qwest field.	\$37 million
SALES TAX DEFERRAL This includes labor and services, material and supplies, and rental of equipment.	\$20 million

* Revenues from these sources will serve bonded indebtedness.

A CASE FOR PUBLIC

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MORE THAN A FOOTBALL STADIUM

Husky Stadium is a unique community facility with a rich heritage, and a contributor to the high quality of life of this region and state. UW athletic programs have a different mission, a longer history, and a deeper community impact than the region's professional sports teams. Husky Stadium is a Washington state landmark with an emotional connection to the community that sets it apart from other typical infrastructure projects. Political debates that center on economic impacts and balance sheets may miss these distinctions. The experiences of other universities indicate that sole reliance on private donations entails trade-offs, and that leaving on-campus facilities for professional ones elsewhere can result in diminished athletic revenues and student participation.

While teaching and research will always be at the heart of the UW's contribution to this region and state, the presence of strong athletics programs and their on-campus facilities contributes to the overall strength of this university by fostering community and increasing public visibility of this institution both regionally and nationally. Top-quality facilities also are essential to recruiting top-notch coaches and student-athletes to play for the Huskies. Beyond the campus, these facilities are a critical element of the University's outreach to the surrounding community, hosting thousands of local events with hundreds of thousands of community participants.

In the modern United States, college football and basketball programs serve as the primary way a university gains visibility and builds a positive reputation among prospective students, faculty, staff, and the community. Collegiate sports create an emotional and intangible connection between a research and teaching institution and its wider community – one that ultimately is more valuable than a set of easily measured economic impacts. Husky Sports are events shared collectively, not just by the UW community, but the wider region and state. We cheer together when our team wins; we agonize together when they lose. Each game is a shared experience for all, from the very young to the dedicated old.

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Photo by Michael Compagno

SOMETIMES EVEN ICONS NEED WORK DONE

This emotional connection is an important part of what makes Husky Stadium a community resource and public asset. The UW athletic program is a powerful symbol of this university and its core values. Husky Stadium is the UW's front porch. Over the generations, the academic programs of the UW have sought to instill integrity, foster independent thinking, and strengthen a commitment to public service in our students. Our athletic programs and their facilities serve as ambassadors of these values in the wider community.

It is time to think about Husky Stadium not as a simple economic asset or as another piece of aging infrastructure, but as a place with a deeply-embedded connection to the State of Washington, the Puget Sound region, and the broad community of UW students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Husky Stadium is a unique place, serving a unique and important community purpose. A public-private partnership supporting its renovation will allow it to maintain its historic mission of service to the people of Washington for many generations to come.

Renovating Husky Stadium with a mix of public and private financing allows the facility to stay true to its traditions and its mission. Public money reinforces and supports the public purpose and public benefits of a university.



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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Produced by UW State Relations and Intercollegiate Athletics, September 2008