

New AD has to deal with issue of 10 percent cuts within department

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

New Colorado athletic director Rick George says when he begins the job in earnest next month, he will do so with an open mind about every person and issue within the department including whether to go forward with 10 percent cuts asked for by interim athletic director Ceal Barry.

George inherits a department deeply in debt, including a \$7.5 million budgetary shortfall caused by poor football ticket sales last season and contract buyouts to the former football coaching staff.

Barry asked each program in the department to trim 10 percent from its discretionary costs to help make up for the shortfall, but George said he will evaluate the issue when he takes over Aug. 12 and decide whether to continue with that approach or change course.

"I think it's important for me to come in there with an open mind on everything and make my own opinions," George said. "I plan to come in there and look at that. Obviously that is another aspect that has to be addressed right away.

"I will look at that as well, but I will form my own opinions. Obviously that will be one of the first things I have to do is meet with all of our financial people and talk about where we're at and really understand where we're at and what our opportunities are and figure out where we go from there."

When Barry announced her plan for 10 percent cuts, she said they would not affect things such as salaries and staffing or other major expense areas. Barry also said the cuts were a request and not mandatory. George is back in Texas completing his duties as president of business operations for the Texas Rangers. He was entertaining bankers and a concessionaire Tuesday night at the Rangers' home game with the New York Yankees.

George said he has found time outside of his responsibilities to the Rangers to talk with as many CU boosters and supporters as possible in addition to friends around the country who work in college athletics.

He said he has been inundated with Facebook friend requests by CU fans. He said he has been pleasantly surprised by the number of former football players who have reached out to him, especially those who played at CU after he had already left the school.

George worked as director of football operations at CU under former coach Bill McCartney from 1987 to 1991.

"I'm real encouraged by that," George said. "I think people genuinely want to take this where we all want it to go. I'd say that's the one thing I have been surprised by is so many people reaching out that didn't know who are CU Buffs."

George said his first two weeks at CU will likely be packed from sunrise to late each night meeting as many people as possible along with meetings to get up to speed on the most crucial issues facing the department.

"There is a lot to do, and I don't even know the scope of what all there is to do at this point, but each day I'm getting a little more bits and pieces and talking to a few more people and I'm going to continue to do that," George said.

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Kyle Ringo Blog: No deadline for CU Buffs to raise \$50 million

By Kyle Ringo Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

A handful of published reports this spring and summer have indicated the University of Colorado athletic department is facing a December deadline under the terms of football coach Mike MacIntyre's contract to raise \$50 million for facilities upgrades.

Those reports are inaccurate.

MacIntyre's contract does include deadlines related to facilities upgrades, but those clauses do not include any mention of funding, let alone specific amounts or deadlines for raising them.

There are two clauses that require the school to meet deadlines. The first calls for a program plan for a Football/Athletics Operations Center to be submitted to the Board of Regents by Dec. 1 of this year. It simply needs to be submitted by that date and not approved.

The second clause requires of the school: "If the award of the design contract has not been made or the design bid build contract has not been executed, depending on the method of project delivery, for the Football/Athletics Operation Center on or before Dec. 1, 2014 no liquidated damages shall be due for termination of the contract from that date forward."

The clauses were put in place when MacIntyre was hired in December to serve as motivation for the school to begin planning for facilities upgrades in and around Folsom Field. If the school does not meet the deadlines, MacIntyre would not have to pay a buyout if he chose to take another job at any point during the life of his contract.

So basically, CU has to simply submit some paperwork to the regents by Dec. 1 this year to fulfill the first clause and has to hire an architect by December 2014 to meet the second clause.

So even though new athletic director Rick George said at his introductory press conference that he believes he can raise the \$50 million quickly, he is under no obligation to raise that money by any specific date.

Former athletic director Mike Bohn's plan was to begin construction first on a new student-athlete academic center under the club level on the east side of Folsom Field as soon as the department raised the first \$8 million of the \$50 million in private funding the school has targeted. Remember the school also intends to finance \$120 million of the \$170 million project that would enclose the north end of the stadium, expand the Dal Ward Center and build a new permanent indoor practice facility.

It remains to be seen if George will take a different approach or if he will also make the academic center the top priority.

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