

Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Deborah Cross Antoine

Board of Trustees
Founder and Honorary Chair
Billie Jean King

Co-Chair
Sandra Vivas

Co-Chair
Madeline Weinstein

President
Grete Eliassen

Past President
Angela Hucles

Vice Presidents
Ilana Kloss
Warde Manuel
Kathryn Olson
Larry Scott

Trustees
Laila Ali
Terri Austin
Lisa Baird
Tamika Catchings
Kelley Cornish
Lisa Cregan
Sasha DiGiulian
Christine Driessen
Larissa Fontaine
Josh Grau
Sarah Hughes
Richard Lapchick
Sharon Love
Jessica Mendoza
Jayma Meyer
Aimee Mullins
Alana Nichols
Andrea Perez
Angela Ruggiero
Tiina Smith
Mori Taheripour

June 13, 2017

Ms. Sherika Montgomery, Chair
Attn: Committee on Women's Athletics
The National Collegiate Athletic Association
700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

Re: STUNT's Petition for Emerging Sport Status

Dear Ms. Montgomery and Committee on Women's Athletics,

The Women's Sports Foundation is aware of the efforts underway by USA Cheer to add STUNT to the NCAA emerging sport list. Their initiative could provide additional opportunities for women to participate and derive the important educational benefits that come with participating in intercollegiate athletics.

The Women's Sports Foundation is the leading authority on the participation of women and girls in sports. Our organization advocates for equality, educates the public, conducts research and offers grants to promote sports and physical activity for girls and women.

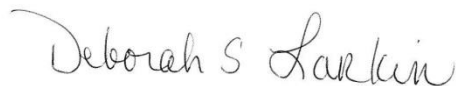
The Women's Sports Foundation believes in the work of the Committee on Women's Athletics and its Emerging Sport process. The expansion of sports participation opportunities for female student-athletes is needed to continue improving gender equity in the NCAA and to realize the promise of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. As you know, Title IX's impact on women's athletic participation is one of the country's greatest success stories. Yet as you are also equally aware, girls and women are still facing pervasive inequalities. According to 2016 EADA data, NCAA schools report female students comprise 54% of the college undergraduate population but receive only 44% of all college athletic participation opportunities. The addition of STUNT as an emerging sport in the NCAA program could help to close this gap.

STUNT boasts a 36-person roster, 20-person competition team, aims to provide 24 college scholarships as an NCAA Championship sport, up to 16 competitions throughout the season, and robust regional and national post-season competitive schedules. This is comparable to other men's and women's more established sports. For example, almost all other sports have enough full grant-in-aids to support a full competitive team, plus between 20% to 150% additional athletes for substitutions, injuries, and practice players. A low scholarship allotment/high roster count can prevent a college or university from being able to comply with its obligation to provide the total amount of scholarship funds available to men and women on a "substantially proportionate" basis.¹ Additionally, a low competition requirement deprives athletes of their ability to improve and test their skills like other athletes, and makes it more likely that sideline cheerleaders will automatically fill the teams,

without generating new opportunities for women. As such, STUNT could provide colleges and universities with an additional way to expand its female sports offerings and help improve compliance with Title IX. While it remains to be seen whether other OCR definitional requirements² for a sport are being met until it is active on campuses, having the designated “Emerging Sport” status would advance the process.

We support the efforts of USA Cheer to secure NCAA emerging sport status for STUNT and urge the Committee on Women’s Athletics to approve their proposal for formal designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah S Larkin".

Deborah Slaner Larkin
Chief Advocacy Officer

¹ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; A Policy Interpretation; Title IX and Intercollegiate Athletics, 44 Fed. Reg. 71,413, 71,418 (Dec. 11, 1979). Available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/t9interp.html>

² The Women’s Sports Foundation is not in favor of changing the definition of a sport for Title IX purposes, as detailed in the OCR’s “Dear Colleague” Letter from Stephanie Monroe, Assistant Sec’y of Educ. for Civil Rights (Sept. 17, 2008) available at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20080917.html>