

## Mount Mercy adding men's volleyball

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For the second time in five years, Mount Mercy University has announced the addition of intercollegiate sports to its varsity lineup. Men's volleyball and competitive cheer & dance will begin competition in the fall of 2016.

The new additions are the first since men's and women's bowling in 2011 and will bring Mount Mercy's number of intercollegiate sports to 17. A search will begin immediately for a head cheer & dance coach as well as a head men's volleyball coach.

"The Robert W. Plaster Athletic Complex now under construction, combined with these initiatives, makes this an exciting time for Mustang athletics," said Rob Callahan, Ph.D., vice president for enrollment and student services. "We look forward to bringing these new opportunities to our students."

In men's volleyball, there are 26 NAIA varsity teams around the nation, including five in the state of Iowa. The sport has held an NAIA invitational since 1999, and Mount Mercy will compete as a varsity program beginning with the 2016-17 academic year.

"Men's volleyball is an exciting sport and it will be a great addition to our athletic department," said Scot Reisinger, Athletics Director. "It will give Mount Mercy an opportunity to recruit in some new areas. The greater Chicago area, Wisconsin and California are men's volleyball strongholds and we look forward to bringing students from these areas to our campus."

There are currently 54 varsity competitive cheer & dance programs in the NAIA. Mount Mercy will conduct the group as an athletic club in 2015-16 with the team obtaining full varsity status beginning in the fall of 2016. The NAIA recently held its second competitive cheer & dance invitational and is on pace to obtain championship status.

"Competitive cheer & dance is one of the fastest growing sports in the NAIA," Reisinger said. "Mount Mercy's team will be a full-fledged sport with a full-time coach and athletic scholarships."

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"Competitive cheer & dance are popular activities at all youth levels in Cedar Rapids and eastern Iowa. Elevating our current club program to varsity status will allow us to keep more talented cheer & dance students here in Cedar Rapids and the state of Iowa."