

[https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wku-students-pushing-for-swim-teams-return/article\\_d8275e62-89f0-551c-92a1-23805ec10ca6.html](https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wku-students-pushing-for-swim-teams-return/article_d8275e62-89f0-551c-92a1-23805ec10ca6.html)

## WKU students pushing for swim team's return

By JACK DOBBS [jack.dobbs@bgdailynews.com](mailto:jack.dobbs@bgdailynews.com)

Apr 27, 2024

### RELATED LINKS



[Marshallman1012@outlook.com](mailto:Marshallman1012@outlook.com)

Nearly 10 years ago, Western Kentucky University's swim team was suspended following an investigation into claims of abuse and hazing. Now, some students at the university are trying to bring it back.

Jaden Marshall, a WKU freshman leading the push, said he has seen support among the student body for the revival.

"I've talked to a lot of students around campus and they've told me they would love for the swim team to come back," Marshall told the Daily News before an informational meeting Wednesday night. "The team getting cut affected so many lives and so many people around the Bowling Green community."

Marshall said the reason for the push is the "rich history" of the WKU swim

program.

“I don’t believe in not trying,” Marshall said. “I believe in following your passions and this is something I’ve been incredibly, incredibly passionate about.”

The team was suspended in 2015 after a Title IX investigation that found the team violated WKU’s code of student conduct along with WKU’s sexual harassment policies.

A member of the swim team at that time filed a complaint with Bowling Green Police saying he was assaulted and forced by other members of the team to consume alcohol. He was 18 at the time and reported multiple incidents of hazing and assault.

The investigation resulted in position eliminations of head coach Bruce Marichonda, associate head coach Brian Thomas and head diving coach Chelsea Ale. The suspension was meant to last five years, but funding for the team was eliminated in 2018.

A lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court against WKU, university athletics officials, coaching staff members and three teammates by the team member in October 2015, and was settled in August 2016 under a confidential resolution.

Marshall described the actions of the team at this time as “something that we cannot ignore.”

“Because of what happened in 2015 I believe we need to wipe the slate clean,” Marshall said. “I definitely, truly believe that.”



FULLER LIFE COUNSELING PARTNERS  
breathe fuller | relax fuller | live fuller  
**VOTED BEST**  
Addiction Treatment Facility  
& FAVORITE Mental Health  
Agency 2 YRS IN A ROW!

Kristina Watt Fuller, MA LPCC-S CFRC  
FULLER LIFE COUNSELING PARTNERS  
5966 Scottsville Rd, Ste #3, Bowling Green, KY 42104  
p 270.904.5104 f 270.201.5980 c 270.791.8189  
e kristy.fuller@fullerlifecounseling.org  
[www.fullerlifecounseling.org](http://www.fullerlifecounseling.org)



During the meeting Marshall said the revival of the swim team is something he has mostly “been trying to tackle himself.”

“I don’t believe I can do it by myself anymore,” Marshall said. “This is me asking for students’ help in this process.”

Marshall said he has been in contact with WKU Athletics Director Todd Stewart about bringing the team back. He said he was told by Stewart the team would need a minimum of \$1 million annually to be fully funded.

Stewart told the Daily News in an email the \$1 million would cover both men’s and women’s swimming and

diving. He said that figure was the cost when the program was suspended in 2015. It would likely need to be higher now.

“That money would have to be raised externally outside of the university,” Stewart said in the email. “The funds earmarked for the swimming programs were eliminated by the university as part of university-wide budget reductions in 2018.”

Also at the meeting was freshman Zacherie Coleman, an electrical engineering major with a minor in business. Coleman said since the team would need such a large investment each year, there would have to be fundraising efforts.

“We know it’s going to take a lot, especially when it comes to money,” Coleman said. “We’re not rich out here.”

Marshall said he is hoping to “hit the ground running” in the fall with this effort, although seeing his vision realized could take some time.

“We understand that this process could take years,” Marshall said. “I’ve talked to many people on this campus and they’ve told me that it’s improbable but not impossible.”

Jace Lux, director of media relations for WKU, said in a text message “There are no current plans to expand the number of sports offered at WKU.”

Marshall said those with questions about the effort or those interested in getting involved can email Marshallman1012@outlook.com.

---

**JackDobbs**