

SALEM INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AQUATICS PROGRAMS RETURN

Salem WV Campus President Robert Long announced the return of the aquatics program at Salem International University. SIU will field men's and women's swimming and water polo teams beginning Fall 2007.

"We are delighted to bring back aquatics to our athletic program. It is in keeping with our intention to reconnect with the local community", Long stated. "We believe that it will add to the enthusiasm building on campus and we look forward to having new student-athletes this Fall as a part of the Salem student body," he added.

The swimming programs and women's water polo program were put on hiatus in 2005-06 in a financial reorganization. Their anticipated return and the continuation of the men's water polo program were hindered due to mechanical issues with the college swimming pool in January 2006. The pool will undergo a significant renovation this summer and be ready for August.

The programs were growing and making some waves when the facility problem arose. The Men's Water Polo program had advanced to the Eastern Championship tournament in 2005 and won the Eastern Division II Championship and the Women had been to the Easterns in 2000.

The Men's Swimming team had won the WVIAC Swimming Championships in 2003 and 2004. The women had won the title in 1998.

Former Swimming and Water polo Coach Keith Bullion is now the Athletic Director at Salem and is looking to assemble a coaching staff, put together competition schedules and jump-start the recruiting of student athletes for the four sports.

"At the time of the hiatus, the university recognized that the loss of the sports had created a hole in the campus culture and the athletes had been some of the finest student-athletes recruited to SIU," Bullion said. "It is a pleasure to witness the return and the ability to again enrich the campus," he added.

The SIU swimming pool was used by the local high school swimming programs for meets and practice and that renewed availability will be a welcome addition to the region and local swimming community.

The return of the four sports will bring the university programs to fourteen, seven for men and seven for women.