



## **TUSC365 Proposal for Relationship with Austin Ultimate:**

**TUSC365 proposes that Austin Ultimate and TUSC365 enter into a signed non-compete of 1-2 years (term to be determined by Austin Ultimate) pertaining exclusively to a youth spring league between the months of February and May. This agreement would closely reflect the terms of our 2022 MOU, with additional details, structure, and specificity in place. The terms of this agreement would be finalized and determined by both parties following the RFP Process.**

Like the MOU, the purpose of this relationship would be to mutually leverage the scale and efficiencies of our respective organizations in order to provide robust, high-quality, sustainable, year-round programming for youth ultimate players, families, coaches, and organizers in the Austin area. TUSC365 believes that this relationship is best for the youth ultimate community in Austin, and for both organizations.

**TUSC recognizes that Austin Ultimate's mission emphasizes and prioritizes engagement and opportunities for the youth ultimate community, and understands that youth ultimate is essential for the health and values of Austin Ultimate as an organization. TUSC believes that it can serve as a resource and an ally in that mission. TUSC provides year-round youth ultimate opportunities, operates with decades of experience and relationships in this field, and seeks to drive those resources into Austin Ultimate youth events as well as maintain its own model of sustainability and expertise. We also believe that we can help foster positive community relationships between our organizations, and facilitate greater outreach with youth ultimate parents, coaches, and players.**

In practice, this relationship would include (but not be limited to) the following:

### **Austin Ultimate will:**

- Exclusively host USA Ultimate (USAU) events and tournaments, including (but not limited to)

- GUM Clinics
- USA Ultimate Texas State High School Championship
- Run Title 1 Afterschool Program
- Oversee and support Youth Club Championship teams
- Provide Youth Director or Executive Committee Member to serve as an advisor on TUSC365 Advisory Committee
- Provide scholarships for youth to increase equity and access to ultimate in Central Texas
- Promote TUSC365 programming which does not conflict with other Austin Ultimate programs via social media, email lists, word-of-mouth and other customary methods
- Participate in mutual, collaborative communication and discussion
- Collaborate on coach and volunteer SafeSport compliance
- Communicate with TUSC365 in order to deconflict youth ultimate programming in timing, scope, location, and format.

*Note: A non-compete between Austin Ultimate and TUSC would only pertain to youth spring league (as described above). The above bullets are intended to identify areas that AU has previously expressed interest in running youth programming, but AU is by no means limited to these items. TUSC is committed to open communication with Austin Ultimate to both support each others' events and minimize overlap / competing programming. Put another way, these are areas of youth programming Austin Ultimate has previously requested that TUSC not pursue as part of our core programming.*

*In all cases, TUSC365 both recognizes and supports AU's desire and need to engage with the Austin youth ultimate community and to provide opportunities for youth ultimate players. TUSC365 would continue to provide resources, time, and labor at no cost to help advise, promote, and execute those initiatives.*

#### **TUSC365 will:**

- Operate and execute TUSC365 Spring League as the exclusive youth spring league in Austin.
- For the sake of communication and planning, TUSC also plans to run year-round programming and team support, including (but not limited to):
  - TUSC365 Summer Camp
  - TUSC365 Fall Programming (i.e. clinics, play days, leagues, tournaments)
  - TUSC365 Winter Workshops (i.e. leadership training, skills training, etc.)
  - Coach Recruitment, Mentoring, Training, Communication
  - School-based Team Recruitment, Rebuilding, Advocacy, and Administrative Support (year-round)
  - Provide one representative to serve as an advisor on the Austin Ultimate Youth Committee
  - Support Austin Ultimate Title 1 Afterschool Program (ex. helping recruit and train coaches)
  - Provide social support for Youth Club Championship teams, including promotion and recruitment, try-outs and practice structure, and coach recruitment and mentoring (as needed)
  - Offer guidance regarding USAU requirements for youth
  - Integrate structured summer youth pick-up opportunities on an as-needed basis

- Promote Austin Ultimate programming which does not conflict with other TUSC365 programs via social media, email lists, word-of-mouth, etc.
- Participate in mutual, collaborative communication and discussion
- Help recruit volunteers for Austin Ultimate events and programs
- Collaborate on coach and volunteer SafeSport compliance
- Communicate with Austin Ultimate in order to deconflict youth ultimate programming in timing, scope, and format.

**Austin Ultimate and TUSC365 will advise and communicate with each other regarding decision-making and topics such as price point, registration numbers, timing, location, format, cross-promotion, brainstorming, problem-solving, and strategy for youth events.** Meetings will take place monthly from December - May, and quarterly from June-November (or more frequently on an as-needed basis). These meetings will include a representative from TUSC365 and an agreed-upon AU Board Member (likely the sitting Youth Coordinator).

**TUSC365 also proposes quarterly attendance at an AU Board Meeting for updates, relationship-building, communication, open discussion, and Q&A.**

**TUSC365 is a year-round business with exclusive focus and attention on running youth ultimate programming. Coach Kepner and TUSC365 have a decades-long history of running successful, safe, engaging playing opportunities with integrity and safety at the core of those events, including spring league.** We have full-time and part-time staff with extensive youth-centered experience and a broad network in education, youth coaching, school counseling and administration. TUSC365 operates on the belief that youth Ultimate requires unique attention, relationships, consistency, and institutional memory to effectively function and grow. TUSC365 is currently the only organization in Austin running successful youth programming the size and scope of youth spring league, and the TUSC365 director is the only area youth organizer with experience running youth spring league specifically.

Though they are undeniably dedicated community members, AU Board Members may or may not have professional experience teaching, coaching, counseling, or working with youth players or children/adolescents, and may lack institutional memory, knowledge, and networks / connections regarding youth ultimate in Austin. TUSC365 can help close that gap when invited to do so to help Austin Ultimate achieve its mission and values, and Austin Ultimate can help provide problem-solving, strategizing, and systematic support for TUSC365. We believe that this one way in which our organizations can maintain a positive, communicative, mutually beneficial relationship that best serves our youth players.

**TUSC365 is committed to maintaining a collaborative and communicative relationship with AU, and we would like to continue refining and improving that relationship.** Though we have different models and structures for our respective organizations, we believe that we can develop systems and procedures that work for both of us to best serve our community.

*Recognizing Austin Ultimate's Request for Proposals for a youth spring league, this document will address TUSC365's overall programming, with a particular emphasis and deep analysis of our model for spring league in particular.*

#### **RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND STRUCTURE:**

*(Note that this section is intended as a starting point for both organizations to workshop together in the interest of forming a better working relationship.)*

## Goals & Intentions:

- Prioritize collaborative, structured decision-making regarding an Austin youth ultimate spring league (specific decision-making items and procedures to be determined by both organizations following the conclusion of this process).
- Acknowledge different organizational timelines.
- Balance discussion and strategizing time with deadlines.
- Embrace difficult conversations and greet them with reflection.
- Assume positive intent.
- Own one's impact (and the impact of the group on our larger community).
- Establish trust.
- Validate both organizations' (and its members') value, impact, and sense of responsibility to the community.
- Improve understanding of both organizations' goals, strengths, service to the community, challenges, and areas of growth.
- Promote and improve each others' work.
- Reflect and share areas of growth.
- Identify alignment of values.

## Systems and Norms:

- Information Sharing
- Discussion Structure Templates / Intentional Planning
- Collaboration on meeting agendas, with ample lead-time to prepare and revise
- Regularly Scheduled Meetings
  - Monthly and quarterly in small youth committee groups including representatives from both TUSC365 and AU
  - Quarterly AU Board meeting attendance with a TUSC365 representative
  - Scheduled engagement, communication, and reports between both organizations regarding youth ultimate updates and programming
- Agreed-upon Communication Platforms / Methods
- Agreed-upon Communication Norms, Expectations, Response Time
  - **Note: This agreement will include an exit clause that offers a clean out if communications between the two organizations or with the community become inflammatory or disrespectful.**
- Step up, step back: All members and participants make space for others to speak, and speak openly when they have insight to share.
- Systematized Decision-Making: i.e. specific number of votes from each organization, with potential for outside parent or coach involvement.

## Areas of Growth for TUSC365:

- Business expansion & education
- Awareness of AU's Board systems and timeline
- Greater acknowledgement of AU's Board composition and how TUSC365 can support in a validating, collaborative manner
- Clear expectations regarding information-sharing, needs, and support opportunities
- Reflect on youth ultimate through the years: share institutional memory / past experience, clarify data, etc.
- Transitioning out of volunteer / teacher mentality
- Bold transparency and trust

- Stress management
- Delegation of tasks / responsibilities
- Learning and systematizing new skills and tasks re: business administration
- Team-building: opportunities for AU and TUSC365 to establish connection outside of “business” operations.
  - *TUSC365 welcomes feedback from Austin Ultimate regarding our areas of growth, both as an organization and within the relationship between our organizations.*

#### **Suggested Areas of Growth for Austin Ultimate:**

- Awareness of TUSC365’s recent expansion; allow sufficient response time regarding data / updates / information-sharing
- Acknowledgement of TUSC365’s history in youth ultimate in Austin
- Acknowledgement of TUSC365’s systems and timeline
- Clear expectations regarding information-sharing, needs, and support opportunities
- Reflect on youth ultimate through the years: share institutional memory / past experience, clarify data, etc.
- Acknowledgement of TUSC365’s role, liability, and value
- Team-building: opportunities for AU and TUSC365 to establish connections outside of “business” operations.
- Clear, consistent point of contact for TUSC365 outside of meetings and other systems (as mutually identified above)
- Consistent messaging
  - *TUSC365 invites Austin Ultimate to share their own areas of growth in their organization and our relationship.*

#### **TUSC365 YOUTH ULTIMATE PROGRAMMING: OVERVIEW**

**TUSC365 Mission [stated on our website]:** TUSC365 believes in Ultimate’s ability to cultivate outstanding athletes and people. This is a sports program that also teaches and reinforces integrity. We prioritize character and sportsmanship at the same time that we promote competitive play, athleticism, and fitness. We’re committed to growing all levels of youth ultimate, supporting equity in our sport, and creating a welcoming atmosphere for all players.

**TUSC365 Goal [stated in our vision-planning document, shared with Austin Ultimate in December 2021]:** Provide robust, high-quality, sustainable, year-round programming for youth Ultimate players, families, coaches, and organizers in the Austin area. Ensure that programs are responsive to unique player and team needs, and adaptable to both predictable and unpredictable circumstances. Support existing teams and help build, mentor, and grow new programs.

**TUSC365 History:** TUSC owner and director Colleen Kepner has been running youth ultimate programming, coaching youth ultimate teams, and mentoring new youth ultimate programs since 2004. A brief overview of Coach Kepner’s related CV below:

- Co-founder: Austin Youth Ultimate Spring League (2005)
- Director: Austin Youth Ultimate Spring League (2005-2011)
- USA Ultimate Certified Youth Coach (2005-Present)
- Coach & Collaborator: National Ultimate Training Camp (NUTC) (2006-Present)
- Founder & Coach: Murchison Middle School Ultimate Team (2005)
- Coach: Kealing Middle School Ultimate Team (2011-2022)

- USA Ultimate Youth Coaches Focus Group: Player Recruitment and Retention (2013)
- Director: University of Texas RecSports Ultimate Camp (2004-2015)
- Director: Nike / USSportsCamps Ultimate Camp (2014-2016)
- Co-Director: UPLA Summer Day Camp (2016)
- Girls State Outreach Coordinator: USA Ultimate - State of Texas (2017-2019)
- Lead Organizer & Volunteer Coach: GUM and Other Youth Ultimate Clinics (2005-Present)
- Certified Middle School English Language Arts Teacher: Amherst Regional Public Schools (2001-2003)
- Certified Middle School English Language Arts and English as a Second Language Teacher: Austin Independent School District (2005-2022)
- Co-Founder, Owner, Director: Texas Ultimate Summer Camp (2017-Present)
- Contributor: GUM / Without Limits High School Girls' Resource Manual (2020)
- Undergraduate Thesis, Women's & Gender Studies: College of the Holy Cross - Research & Oral History of Adolescent Girls in Sport (2001)
- Master's Thesis, American Studies: University of Texas at Austin - Black Female Athletic Narrative (2005)
- Coach - Middle School, Junior Varsity, and Varsity Levels: Field Hockey, Softball, Basketball, Track & Field - Amherst Regional Public Schools & Austin Independent School District (2001-2011)

Over the course of Coach Kepner's tenure as a volunteer, coach, and organizer in the Austin youth ultimate community, participation in youth ultimate in Austin has grown by over 15x its original enrollment/participation. Most notably, Coach Kepner co-founded youth spring league with two other area teachers in 2005, and ran the league until 2011 when it grew to be too large for her to manage as a volunteer while also teaching in Austin ISD full-time and coaching two teams in the league. At that time, UPLA stepped in to provide administrative support for existing teams to participate. Under the careful guidance and selfless attention of then-Youth Coordinator Libby Cravens, league also saw expansion and growth until it reached its peak of 600 players in 2018.

In 2017, Coach Kepner launched the Texas Ultimate Summer Camp (TUSC) with co-director and then-current UPLA Youth Coordinator Libby Cravens. Drawing from Coach Kepner's cultivated networks and experience as director of ultimate camps for the University of Texas, USSportsCamps/Nike, and the Ultimate Players League of Austin, TUSC's first year brought over 80 youth players ages 8-18, who attended as both day and overnight campers. In January of 2020, Coach Kepner incorporated TUSC, and offered safe, affordable programming and support for players through the Covid-19 pandemic (including virtual and in-person events and engagement opportunities). In the fall of 2021, TUSC365 expanded to support year-round programming with dedicated, full-time support, resources, and expertise, including returning to her roots coordinating and implementing TUSC365 Spring League.

Coach Kepner's first camp at UT Austin in 2004 included 12 players, ranging in age from 8-17. Her first-ever youth spring league in 2006 hosted four teams. Her first clinic in 2007 brought 36 youth players. Her camps and team developments grew steadily in the following years. In 2022, TUSC365 hosted 363 players in its spring league (with 18 teams and representation from over 25 different schools), 220 players at summer camp, and 60 players (plus a 10-person waitlist, required due to field space limitations) for their first-ever fall clinic event in

September. TUSC365 is also running a 5v5 hat league in October 2022 and a 5v5 tournament in November 2022.

*Note: In October of 2021, TUSC owner Colleen Kepner reached out to representatives from the UPLA Board with questions and problem-solving strategies regarding youth spring league 2022. TUSC and Austin Ultimate signed an MOU in February of 2022 to identify aspects of youth ultimate programming that each organization wanted to support and provide, and an intention to continue discussions to support each other in their respective goals. (That MOU is still active, and set to expire December 31st, 2022.) Austin Ultimate did not provide contacts, funding, or a transfer of “ownership” to facilitate TUSC365’s expansion or execution of Spring League. The two organizations did not form a legal contractual obligation or partnership; rather, the MOU states that they would use language such as “with support from” and/or “in collaboration with.” TUSC365 drew on its existing network of contacts, institutional memory, resources, and experience to operate spring league independently.*

### **TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE 2023: VISION, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Spring league is paramount to TUSC365’s goal to provide year-round programming to youth ultimate players, coaches, families, and schools in the greater Austin area.** While we also offer several weeks of ultimate camp in the summer, multiple opportunities to play at various tiers and levels in the fall, and unique workshop events in the winter months, much of this work is intended to drive interest and create structural support for spring league – where players can compete while representing their schools alongside their classmates and teammates.

#### **Club Versus UIL Sports:**

The Austin area youth spring league is generally and historically school-based, with players identifying themselves by the school that they attend. However, ultimate is a club sport in Austin (rather than an official UIL sport), which provides some flexibility with team arrangements. As such, players without programs at their schools, or with smaller rosters, have the option to combine with other smaller programs to ensure that all teams have sufficient rosters to play safely and competitively and that all players have an opportunity to participate. TUSC365 commits extensive time during the o-season to recruit and identify these players and schools, supporting growth and recruitment for smaller programs while also matching players with teams who might welcome them. We also support combined rosters by facilitating relationships between teacher-sponsors, school administrators, parents, and players across school communities. We step in to support tasks such as field reservations, practice plans, and coaching assignments when appropriate. This support also ensures that teams without coaches are identified early, in order to replace and train those coaches in a timely manner to preserve those teams.

#### **Time, Experience, and Relationships:**

Youth spring league requires full-time attention, including nights and weekends. Though YSL technically takes place over roughly 8-10 weeks in the spring, it requires year-round outreach and attention in order to maintain current programs and develop new ones. This is especially true in light of the pandemic, which has presented unique and additional challenges regarding player safety, mental and emotional health and responsiveness, and a need for more dedicated intervention to rebuild teams who folded over the last three years and to recover the youth players who left our sport for others that had returned to play. TUSC365 supports and ensures YSL’s success and sustainability with advance planning, specific and experienced guidance,

**year-round full-time commitment and staffing**, coach training and support, player and team intervention and mentoring, and communication with school administrators and parents.

### **TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE 2023: PROGRAM QUALITY**

#### **SAFETY: COACHES**

**Coaches will be required to complete SafeSport Training and Background Checks through USA Ultimate by February 10th, 2023 – prior to coaching at practices or games overseen by TUSC365.** Coaches will be given notice of this deadline in our pre-season coaches meeting, currently scheduled for December 5th, 2022. Coaches will also be required to complete a TUSC365/league-specific training course addressing our Code of Conduct, as well as other league-specific details and core values for TUSC365 and the sport of Ultimate. Note that known/returning 2023 Spring League coaches have already been notified about these requirements, and will be reminded on a regular basis throughout the fall and winter months. As new coaches are recruited and vetted, they will also be notified of these requirements. TUSC365 maintains a coaching roster through USA Ultimate, which enables the organization to monitor existing coach background checks and SafeSport status. These coaches are also monitored and guided (as needed) but experienced TUSC365 staff.

**Coaches will be compensated directly by TUSC365, including practice and game hours as well as reimbursement for costs incurred for the background check and SafeSport / TUSC365 training hours.** As TUSC365 employees, coaches will be given direct guidance and held accountable for their conduct with regard to instruction, rapport with players and families, behavior on the sideline, Spirit of the Game, and overall professionalism (i.e. punctuality, communication, language, etc.). Coaches will also be required to complete a W-9 tax document in order to receive compensation exceeding \$600.

**TUSC365 has been - and will continue to - maintain a list of current and former coaches and teams, using “off-season” months during the summer, fall, and winter to**

- A) Identify coaches who are stepping down from their positions
- B) Recruit, train, and mentor new coaches
- C) Identify new and existing programs in need of coaches
- D) Match coaches with teams based on schedule, geography, and particular coach experience / skill set and team culture
- E) Facilitate the relationship between coaches and teams, especially in the case of “new” placement

**In 2022, TUSC365 employed 29 Spring League coaches, 22 Summer Camp coaches, and more recently 16+ additional coaches for our new Fall Programming.** We are currently in the process of identifying which Spring League coaches will be returning, and early responses indicate that all but 2-3 plan to be back in 2023. For those who are leaving, we are currently working to recruit, train, and match replacements with schools in need.

#### **SAFETY: FIELDS**



**As in 2022, TUSC365 anticipates running its 2023 Spring League at East Metropolitan Park in Manor, TX.** Feedback from our parents and players in 2022 indicated that they felt these fields were well-maintained, safe, and large enough for our event to operate effectively and efficiently. TUSC365 also established the best process for refilling water at this location, developed relationships with the on-site staff to ensure that player needs are met, and we were relieved to see that the restrooms were open and operational by the conclusion of league (following repairs that were necessary due to the 2021 winter storms).

Note: During the pandemic, these fields were used almost exclusively by soccer clubs, and UPLA's standing reservation for youth spring league from 2019 lapsed, affecting field availability. This was not a factor in 2022 because we didn't have as many teams, but we may have to adjust the schedule according to field availability and space if and when our teams rebuild post-pandemic.

#### **SAFETY: ATHLETIC TRAINERS / MEDICAL STAFF**

TUSC365 has a contract with Baylor, Scott, and White Health to provide athletic trainers for all of our events. TUSC365 provides access to an AED and ice for minor injuries, and the on-site athletic trainers provide personnel, first aid supplies, and expert care for the medical needs of our athletes.

TUSC365 has also employed a full-time nurse in the past, particularly in the case of Summer Camp, when our players are with us around the clock. However, that has not proven essential in the case of day-only events like Spring League.

*TUSC365 also recognizes that player safety includes resources and training regarding mental and emotional wellness, behavior management tools, understanding of systemic and recent adolescent trauma, and more. While we do not currently offer counseling services, this is part of our long-range goals and plans.*

#### **SAFETY: INSURANCE**

As in 2022, TUSC365 intends to submit a field reservation request on January 1st, 2023 (the date that the Travis County Parks Department opens that window for requests), and will have insurance in place to submit promptly when the reservation is secured. **As with our spring league, summer camp, and fall series of events in 2022, we will use COR Plus Commercial Insurance Company for this league.** Our representative is Lucynda Guilla, who also works with other Ultimate and youth sports organizations to provide insurance quotes and certificates.

#### **SAFETY: MISCONDUCT REPORTING SYSTEM / PROCESS:**

**TUSC365 is in the process of developing our Code of Conduct, Reporting System, and Judiciary Process to address reports of player, sta, and/or parent misconduct on and o the field.** We are drawing on resources from other sports such as USA Gymnastics, USA Ice Hockey, and Roller Derby, as well as other ultimate organizations including (but not limited to) Austin Ultimate, Washington Area Frisbee Club, USA Ultimate, Boston Ultimate Disc Association, and Bay Area Disc Association. Our staff is also calling on their unique experience working in sports, education, and law. We anticipate completing this process by December 31st, 2022 and publishing our final draft by January 1st, 2023.

**Our staff in this process includes the following individuals:**

- Caroline Pelligrini

- Former TUSC overnight staff/ coach (2018-2019)
- Former NUTC overnight staff/ coach (2018-2019)
- BS, Kinesiology (University of Massachusetts)
- MS, Sports Science (University of Pittsburgh)
- College Ultimate Player, UMass ZooDisc (Women's Division, Amherst MA)
- Club Ultimate Player, Parcha (Women's Division, Pittsburgh PA)
- Cory Oakes
  - Certified Middle School Teacher (Austin ISD)
  - JD, Cornell University
  - Current TUSC parent of a female-matching player
- Jenna Martin
  - Certified Middle School Teacher (Austin ISD)
  - Certified School Administrator (Austin ISD)
  - Co-founder, Austin-Area Youth Spring League (2005)
  - Former Middle School Ultimate Coach & Team Founder, Kealing Middle School (2004-2010)
  - Current TUSC parent of three female-matching players and one male-matching player

#### **CONTENT: PROPERLY ADMINISTERED GAMES OF ULTIMATE**

**TUSC365 Spring League will include six weeks of games for high school teams (including two games per weekend, totaling 12 games total for the season), as well as eight total weeks of practices.** The Middle School season will include 4-5 weeks of games (totaling 8-10 total games and 7-9 total weeks of practice). Rounds will be 90 minutes for all divisions, totaling 3 hours of game time per week whether in the middle school or the high school division. TUSC365 will manage logistics such as field setup/breakdown, water, ice, additional equipment (as needed), timekeeping/horns to monitor game length, score sheets and record-keeping, collaboration with field staff, etc.

**As in 2022, TUSC365 will send weekly email updates to the maintained and expanded list of players, parents, coaches, and school administrators.** This messaging will include game schedules, field assignments, and opponents. It will also include “Coach Kepner’s Corner” – a section identifying and clarifying key rules of the sport and discussing elements of Spirit of the Game. This section intends to help instruct new players and families as well as establish expectations regarding Self-Officiation, coach-coach interaction, best practices for sideline behavior, and more.

**TUSC365’s Spring League model compensates and holds coaches accountable for the hours that they spend coaching during games, as well as one two-hour practice per week.** In the case of newer coaches, we have staff available to attend practices in a mentoring capacity to support existing coaches and help improve practice quality and player education / growth.

**Playing time will be addressed in the aforementioned TUSC365 Pre-Season training for coaches.** The expectation will be that all players are granted reasonable playing time, with some acknowledgement of coach discretion, team goals, culture, and leadership. Part of our training includes discussion regarding communication with parents and players with regard to playing time, including addressing the reality in Ultimate when it comes to longer versus shorter points; this is of particular import in youth Ultimate and during the often-windy

conditions of Spring League, and the relatively undeveloped skill set in the youth ultimate environment. We gave coaches the option in 2022 to call a “free” timeout after ten minutes of continuous play to sub out players, and we intend to implement the same practice in 2023. Our training will also address and unpack issues such as gender and racial equity, roster size, average grade level / age of the players, and other factors relevant to playing time and league culture.

#### **CONTENT: ATMOSPHERE & CULTURE**

**TUSC365 has a history of providing quality media coverage for our programs, including highlight reels and photography.** In 2022 we applied that model to spring league, launching a professional media effort to feature and celebrate our youth ultimate players. We have a staff of five (or more, as needed) photographers, videographers, and media editors. We provide prompt and professional media coverage through photographs, highlight videos, and social media posts featuring our players, coaches, and teams. In 2022 we used social media to report league standings and results, post updates and news from the fields, and to feature “Players of the Week” from every team. *Note: TUSC365 secures express permission from parents and guardians to post and share images of players and player names.*

#### **CONTENT: WEBSITE / WEB PRESENCE**

**TUSC365’s website hosts a range of media, communication, and registration information for players and families.** This is the central hub for players to access updates and find answers to questions they may have about programming and the organization’s history. We also have full-time staff available to respond to emails and schedule meetings with parents, teachers, coaches, and school administrators. That staff also regularly communicates with the larger community via social media – namely Instagram and Twitter – with various media content featuring players, coaches, and news and updates about opportunities to play.

#### **CONTENT: EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, OUTREACH**

**TUSC365 prioritizes three core tenets to make our programming - including spring league - welcoming and accessible to all players:**

1. **Equity:** Recognizing that equity requires unique resources and attention based on specific player needs, we seek to engage with every team, player, and family to best understand their team culture and community and unique needs. This might include price point, transportation, equipment, language support / translation and communication, coaches with specific expertise working with a particular school population, or other services and resources.
2. **Accessibility:** TUSC365 uses a “Pay What You Can” sliding scale model for spring league, enabling players to participate and receive the same high-quality programming at a price point that works for their specific financial circumstances. This ensures that spring league is financially accessible to all players at all levels. However, we also recognize that accessibility extends beyond cost. With that in mind, we work directly with coaches and schools to help secure fields for practices (as well as games), reserve transportation such as buses and carpools when feasible, communicate with parents to provide equipment and gear, seek feedback on game times/dates/location, and reduce barriers for participation as much as possible.
3. **Outreach:** The largest obstacle in growing our sport to underrepresented populations is awareness. TUSC365 has full-time staff with extensive experience working in Title I schools and training in equity and outreach, and a network of support from teachers,

coaches, counselors, parents, and administrators at schools across the city. Our organization communicates with officials at underrepresented schools to host clinics through their p.e. classes, spread the word about existing opportunities, provide coaches with unique experience, and mentor and train those coaches accordingly.

#### **CONTENT: REFLECTION & DECISION-MAKING**

**TUSC365 creates an atmosphere and culture based on communication, reflection, community engagement, and responsiveness.** With dedicated, highly-experienced full-time staff, we are able to respond to both short-term and long-term needs with intention and care. We root our atmosphere in our mission and goals (stated above), with consistent attention to equity, community questions, and concerns.

#### **ADDITIONAL TUSC365 REFLECTION TOOLS AND PLATFORMS:**

- TUSC365 “Office Hours”: Open meetings where players, parents, coaches, and school administrators may ask questions, make suggestions, and express concerns.
- TUSC365 Advisory Committee: Composed of 12 parents, players, former players, coaches, and school officials from different schools and backgrounds who provide feedback, guidance, and perspective on appropriate and effective decision-making for TUSC365 programs and events.
- Regular opportunities for our participants, staff, and families to provide feedback via google forms for each unique program/event, offered to both coaches/staff and players/families.

#### **PLANNING: TIMELINE**

*TUSC365 believes that establishing a clear and specific timeline, as well as identifying the parties involved, will ensure consistent and transparent communication between both organizations. These meetings will also help build trust, ensure proper decision-making, and help avoid conflicting or overlapping events.*

#### **May-December:**

- YSL Reflection
- Brainstorming & Strategizing
- Planning & Implementation of Fall Programming
- Team Recruitment, Outreach, Rebuilding
- Current Coach Check-ins
- New Coach Recruitment and Training

#### **December-March:**

- Off-the-Field Support, such as Winter Workshop Series: Leadership, Skills Training, Strength/Fitness/Injury Prevention, Office Hours, Equity & Inclusion, Chalk Talk / Strategy
- Coaching Clinics
- New Coach + Team Placement, Introductions, Facilitation
- Pre-Season Coaches Meeting & Training

- Collaboration with Austin Ultimate
- Secure Field Reservations, Insurance, Athletic Trainers
- Launch Registration
- Order Gear (discs, jerseys)

### **March-April:**

- Practices
- Tentative Start Date: Monday, March 6th
- Games Tentative Start Date: Saturday, March 25th
- Weekly Communication with Players, Parents, Coaches
- Social Media League / Player Celebrations (Players of the Week, Game Day Results, League Standings, etc.)
- Photography & Videography
- Gear Distribution
- *Note: TUSC365 has a reserve list of certified, background-checked coaches to substitute on game days if and when a coach has a conflict and cannot attend.*

### **PLANNING: TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE MILESTONES/DEADLINES**

- Milestone 1: Planning Discussion with Austin Ultimate Representative (November/December)
- Milestone 2: Pre-Season Coaches Meeting / TUSC365 Spring League Training Shared w. Coaches (December)
- Milestone 3: Planning / Update with Austin Ultimate Representative (December/January)
- Milestone 4: Submit Field Reservation Request (window opens per Travis County Parks & Rec) (January)
- Milestone 5: Open Registration for TUSC365 Spring League (January 15-22)
- Milestone 6: Planning / Update with Austin Ultimate Representative (February)
- Milestone 7: Order Gear (jerseys, discs, miscellaneous equipment as needed) (February)
- Milestone 8: Coach Training, SafeSport, and Background Checks Due (February)
- Milestone 9: Teams Begin Official TUSC365 Spring League Practices (March)
- Milestone 10: Planning / Update with Austin Ultimate Representative (March)
- Milestone 11: Begin Games (March/April)
- Milestone 12: Distribute Gear to Teams (March/April)
- Milestone 13: Planning / Update with Austin Ultimate Representative (April)
- Milestone 14: Complete Games (April/May)
- Milestone 15: YSL Wrap-up (feedback forms, share media, preview o-season programming) (May)
- Milestone 16: Reflection / Update with Austin Ultimate Representative (May)

### **Ongoing:**

- Team Mentoring and Support
- Coach Check-ins and Accountability
- Communication with Players, Teams, Coaches, Families/Parents

- Media Presence and Player Celebration

#### **PLANNING: DEADLINE CONTINGENCY PLANS**

The first and most important step toward meeting deadlines is advance planning and lead-time. TUSC365 implements planning strategies by calling on its unique and extensive experience:

- TUSC365 and Coach Kepner have run youth spring league 7 times before
- TUSC365 and Coach Kepner have run 30+ youth ultimate events in the Austin area over the last two decades
- TUSC365 has full-time dedicated staff to manage and meet deadlines
- TUSC365 and Coach Kepner have 20+ years of experience in setting and implementing deadlines specifically for adolescents and families
- TUSC365 and Coach Kepner have 20+ years of experience in communicating with adolescents, families, and coaches/teachers.

Coach Kepner and TUSC365 are organized and aware of the need to meet stated deadlines. However, youth spring league also requires flexibility, knowing that unexpected obstacles may present themselves when working with field reservations, gear orders, insurance companies, a range of new and returning coaches and families, and other organizations and businesses who may require more time and accountability to work efficiently. With that in mind, **TUSC365 is prepared to bring on additional support staff to make up for lagging timelines, the inevitable rush of immediate action items at particular times of the season, and more. Missed deadlines require additional resources, invested work time, and creative problem-solving to ensure that youth spring league operates effectively.**

#### **PLANNING: RESOURCES TO MEET AND MANAGE DEADLINES**

TUSC365's existing relationships with coaches, gear companies, the Travis County Parks Department, our media team, Austin Ultimate, families/players, teachers and school officials, and more will act as our greatest resource in managing youth spring league deadlines. Because we are already in consistent contact with ALL of these parties, even 6-8 months ahead of the league start-date, we are aware of their deadlines, restrictions, and needs, and can communicate effectively to help them help us run a smooth and effective youth event.

#### **PLANNING: STAFFING**

Most of TUSC365's Spring League staff is already in place, but we plan to confirm their roles and commitment by January 1st, 2022 and expand that staff on an ongoing basis. If additional teams form and need coaches, we'll draw from our reserve list to match them up appropriately.

Current and Anticipated TUSC365 Staff:

- Henry Charbeneau: Middle School Coach & Assistant Director
- Catie Graves: Assistant Director & Substitute Coach
- Coaching Staff: 50-60 Returning YSL Coaches and/or Newly-Recruited
- Coaches from Year-Round Programming (Summer, Fall)

- Accounting & Bookkeeping Staff
- Athletic Trainers
- Legal Counsel
- Media Team (likely 1-2 photographers and 1-2 videographers)
- Additional Coaching Staff (as needed) will be recruited from past TUSC365 events, local college, club, and semi-pro teams, and area schools. In some cases, parents and teachers act as ultimate coaches/sponsors. Note that with TUSC365's support and guidance, parents and teachers have often become some of our strongest and most dedicated coaches. We also have a core of former players from TUSC programs who have gone on to be outstanding coaches and mentors within our organization. *Note that our summer camp staff was almost entirely composed of former campers/players themselves.*

#### **PLANNING: COACH TRAINING & SUPPORT**

**In order to best prepare and mentor our coaches, TUSC365 provides the following (as requested):**

- Practice Plans
- Drills
- Fitness
- Injury Prevention
- Behavior Management
- Practice Attendance / Direct Training, Mentoring, Support
- Specific TUSC365 Spring League Training
- League Details
- Guidance Regarding Rules & Spirit of the Game
- Guidance Regarding Playing Time
- Coach Compensation - Information and Requirements
- SafeSport Training - compensated hours
- Reimbursement for Background Check costs
- Consistent Check-ins and Communication
- Mediation with Parents (as needed)
- Communication and Advocacy with Families, School Administrators, etc.
- Messaging Regarding Payment Options and/or Management of Team
- Registration Payments
- Coaching Clinics: Coach Kepner will be offering several coaching clinics through USA Ultimate, following her own certification for these clinics in November 2022. TUSC365 will also cover the registration cost for these coaches. Anticipated clinic dates are TBD, but will likely take place alongside existing in-person ultimate events to maximize attendance.

#### **TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE 2023: ACCESSIBILITY REGISTRATION FEE & PRICING**

*Note: TUSC365 acknowledges and understands that Austin Ultimate would like to see a reduction in the top-tier of the sliding scale (i.e. "sticker price") for youth spring league, and welcomes open dialogue and creative problem-solving to address that concern as well as to preserve TUSC365's business stability. These conversations will require more time and attention, and we hope to collaborate further to find a balance between our positions on the subject. We also want to reiterate that both organizations have committed years of service to the youth community - primarily in a volunteer capacity - and believe that we share values about accessibility and equity.*

*The information below reflects the pricing from TUSC365's 2022 Spring League. However, they are not "official" price points for 2023 yet, and TUSC365 will eagerly enter into discussions with Austin Ultimate in an attempt to revise this pricing model moving forward. We would like to consider ways in which AU might offset the cost to meet their stated goals for TUSC365's price point, while also ensuring a sustainable, high-quality program and experience for all players (see below for a suggestion).*

**In 2022, the average price-per-player for TUSC365 Spring League was \$142, with a range of tiered sliding-scale pricing from \$0 to \$360.**

**As in 2022, TUSC365's 2023 Spring League will follow a "Pay What You Can" model, in which individuals select the price point that is accessible for them, including entering their own price as needed.** Players all registered in the same manner (assuming that they signed up individually on the website), but selected a different price based on their situation. Players did not have to prove or justify need, but instead self-selected a particular tiered price point and completed registration accordingly.

*The website states, "no judgment and no questions asked."*

#### **SUGGESTED:**

#### **PRICE REDUCTION WITH AUSTIN ULTIMATE'S PARTICIPATION**

AU has stated that it is willing and able to take a loss on a spring league for up to three years in order to bring the price point down. With that in mind, TUSC believes there could be some interesting ways AU could guarantee its desired regular-price by "subsidizing" TUSC's regular-price. For example, using hypothetical numbers:

132 out of 360 total registrations in 2022 paid the "standard price" in 2022. Using that number, if AU feels that the standard price should be \$40 less, AU could reduce that standard price by guaranteeing TUSC \$5,280 (132 x \$40) to list the price at \$40 less for both the middle school and the high school divisions.

In this scenario, AU sets the standard price it wants while having a fixed, known expense for Spring League (funded by AU's adult programming, as stated at the Town Hall on October 22nd) without taking on any risk or liability. TUSC365 has no plans to *raise* (and in fact hopes to reduce) the price from 2022, so this would be an alternate way that AU could dictate price point in 2023 without having to enter into any kind of formal agreement regarding who has decision-making power in each other's organization, etc. AU has indicated plans to subsidize the price point (in AU's model) with AU funds not generated by a youth spring league, this kind of arrangement would just be a different way to achieve those same results with the same funds while still getting TUSC365's high-quality programming, experience, consistency, network, etc.



Again, this is simply a suggestion for how we might begin conversations about reducing price and navigating authority and decision-making.

#### **Additional 2022 Cost Breakdown & Details:**

- **140 Players (or 39% of the TOTAL across high school and middle school registrants) paid \$50 or less.**
- **160 Players (or 44% of the TOTAL across high school and middle school registrants) paid \$100 or less.**
- **The AVERAGE COST PER PLAYER across middle school and high school divisions was \$142.**
- **The AVERAGE COST PER PLAYER in the middle school division was \$133 (or \$5.50 / hour).**
- **The AVERAGE COST PER PLAYER in the high school division was \$157 (or \$4.60 / hour).**

#### **Registration Fee Breakdown:**

*These numbers indicate the percentage of players who registered at which tier on the sliding scale.*

- High School “Pay it Forward” Rate: 3%
- High School Regular Rate: 20%
- High School Discounted Rate: 6%
- Middle School “Pay it Forward” Rate: 2%
- Middle School Regular Rate: 27%
- Middle School Discounted Rate: 1%
- **Team Rate & Scholarships: 14%**
  - *Team rates were cases when the schools, administrators, and/or coaches managed or subsidized the cost for their players. Players either paid their school and then the school paid TUSC365 one combined total, or the players paid nothing at all and the schools paid TUSC365. In all cases, the teams paid a discounted or fully subsidized rate per player. Players still registered and entered their participation information individually, but payment was submitted by the school/team.*
  - *Scholarships include partial and full scholarships; some of these were addressed as part of the team rates, and others were individually addressed by TUSC365. Because players were able to register for as little as \$1 using the Pay What You Can option, we had very few scholarship requests; however, all scholarship requests (partial and full) were honored and met.*
- **“Pay What You Can” Rate Across Divisions: 27%**
  - **“Pay What You Can” registrants paid between \$1 and \$200, entering their own price point.**
  - **This percentage includes “Pay What You Can” costs across both grade level divisions, because this payment option did not distinguish between high school and middle school players.**

The “Pay What You Can” model is based on the premise of EQUITY, in which players who can and want to pay more may opt to do so, with the explicit awareness that this will help others

participate and receive the same quality programming even if they don't have the same level of means. Meanwhile, players who do not have the means will still receive the same exact product, with additional resources (i.e. transportation, equipment, etc.) provided as well if needed. The registration process is and will be transparent about the options, and will offer guidance about how to consider what is feasible and appropriate based on an individual's financial circumstances. Individual player payments will remain confidential.

One of the challenges in 2022 was the extremely short timeline and the urgency to launch youth spring league as efficiently as possible following a three-year hiatus. With that in mind, our pay structure was rolled out quickly and with less advance planning and clarity than we would have liked. **In order to provide clearer communication and increase accessibility in 2023, we plan to**

- Seek guidance and feedback from our advisory committee of parents, players, former players, and coaches to improve and streamline our messaging prior to publishing and opening registration.
- Seek input from Austin Ultimate's representative to improve and streamline our message prior to publishing and opening registration.
- Ensure a straightforward registration process.
- Provide advance notice (likely 1-2 months prior to opening registration) to the youth ultimate community.
- Offer opportunities for direct Q&A regarding registration, such as visiting team practices and holding TUSC365 Office Hours.
- Continue researching budgets, models, and structures in other youth sports and youth ultimate communities.

**The stated "regular" cost of TUSC365 Spring League is \$10/hour (or less), and includes both practice and game hours. That comes out to:**

- Middle School Teams: 12 Game Hours + 12 Practice Hours = \$220
- High School Teams: 18 Game Hours + 16 Practice Hours = \$340
  - *Note: Some Middle School Teams / Families requested more games in 2023, which would bring up the "regular price" for those participants by a small margin. This would be discussed with TUSC365's advisory committee and would depend on the number of participating teams. The sliding scale would still be available and unchanged.*

This will be stated and outlined on the TUSC365 website / registration page, as part of the overall transparency and communication regarding price point. However, players will still have the option to pay more ("Pay it Forward") or less ("Discounted / Pay What You Can rates"), without question or additional hurdles or steps.

*Note: This price point is significantly lower than most comparable youth sports leagues in the Austin area, including soccer, climbing, football, lacrosse, volleyball, softball, baseball, basketball, cross-country, and others, which average out to \$12-\$17/hour. Though the TUSC365 "regular price" appears higher than some other youth ultimate leagues, the price on average is comparable and in many cases lower than similar leagues and youth ultimate programs in comparable cities. Additionally, our model is different because coach compensation comes from the same organization / league, and those costs are simply rolled into the registration fees. In contrast, in other parts of the country the coaches are often compensated separately by team dues, school stipends, funds from*

*adult programming, or other sources such as PTA and parent groups, or from funds generated through adult ultimate programming and events. TUSC365 also compensates coaches for practice hours in addition to game hours, identifying the additional work coaches put into building their teams outside of game days. Many other youth ultimate leagues also require players to register as USA Ultimate members, raising their cost to play as well. Austin-area coaches have historically operated as volunteers, which has led to coach burnout and misconduct, and team dissolution when a trusted or dedicated coach has to step away.*

**Being that the average player paid \$142 in 2022, TUSC365 has considered the option of dropping the regular price to that amount (effectively making it less than \$5/hour for everyone).** However, this would eliminate the option for a sliding scale, and in fact remove this equitable model. Most players who paid less than the regular price in fact paid between \$0 and \$75, while players who paid over \$50-\$75 typically paid full price or more than full price – effectively closing the gap on the budget. If the regular price were cut in half, we would have to either remove the sliding scale / “Pay What You Can” option (thereby losing the players who cannot pay more than \$50-\$75), or take a loss – leading to the withdrawal of coach/organizer compensation or a negative impact on the overall quality of the product. In short, both of those options would reduce or fully eliminate equity, quality, sustainability, accessibility, and accountability for ALL participants.

**TUSC365 is exclusively committed to YOUTH ULTIMATE PROGRAMMING. As such, every dollar collected for our programs goes back into youth ultimate programming – toward making it stronger, more accountable, more equitable, more accessible, and more reflective of the overall diversity of our sport both in our coaching staff and our players.**

*Note that many youth ultimate communities across the country are implementing the sliding scale model at increasing rates, and most report success with this approach. Others are moving toward a for-profit model, charging \$20-\$35 / hour for camps, clinics, and leagues, without a sliding scale option.*

**TUSC365 welcomes ongoing discussion about the best way to make spring league accessible for youth players and to reduce cost, and will continue to engage with members of the ultimate community in Austin (including parents, players, coaches, AU representatives, and more) to address this topic.** We are also currently working on ways to offset the cost of registration, such as fundraising efforts, grant-writing, and scholarship funds.

#### **PLAYER SCHOLARSHIPS & TEAM RATES**

**With TUSC365’s “no-judgment, no questions asked” sliding scale model for spring league fees, scholarships are effectively unnecessary because players may opt to register for \$0 if necessary without any barrier or justification required.** This aligns with best practices for equity and inclusion, recognizing that those most in financial need are also frequently less able to “prove” need due to language, logistical, administrative, and technical barriers.

However, we are implementing a Harper Ray Memorial Award fund to recognize at least one player per year with a monetary scholarship; players can be nominated by a coach, parent, or teammate, will submit an application, and awards will be determined by a committee of no fewer than five adult individuals outside of the immediate youth ultimate community.

**TUSC365 will also work with individual coaches, teams, and schools, to establish a team rate or fund an entire team’s participation as requested.** This may include subsidies from the school to cover player costs (or partial costs), or a team rate that accounts for players

identified by the school as in particular need. In 2022, this was the case for three separate teams with regard to the payment process.

### **INCLUSIVITY**

**TUSC365's values and mission are clearly stated on our website, and repeated regularly in communication with parents, players, coaches, and schools.** In particular, we aim to employ language that sets a tone of inclusivity and accountability, and promotes a welcoming atmosphere at our events and within our teams. We seek input and feedback from our Advisory Committee regarding that language, to continue refining our understanding of the impact that language has on kids, families, and coaches alike. We also state our expectations regarding inclusivity in our coach trainings, and model those expectations in explicit and implicit ways. Our forthcoming Code of Conduct will reinforce those expectations and offer opportunities for individuals to report misconduct, and to address those instances directly, ethically, and responsibly.

**TUSC365 believes that relationships are the key to helping individuals – including players, parents, and coaches – feel included and welcome. With decades of experience in education, we are committed to responsive, prompt, communicative relationships with all stakeholders.** This includes examples such as open dialogue with our non-binary and trans players to understand ways to implement inclusive language in our marketing materials; direct communication and outreach for under-represented schools and populations and intentional coach matchings for those programs and students; engagement with school counselors, teachers, and parents (including parent groups); direct communication with parents to best meet the needs of their individual children's particular circumstances; planned opportunities for all-female-matching events, and more.

**TUSC365's Advisory Committee also includes a range of current and former players from different teams, levels, backgrounds and experiences, with the intent to bring new voices and fresh perspectives into the decision-making process.**

**At the most basic of levels, TUSC365 operates on the practice of "learning everyone's name."** It sounds simple, but knowing the names of the players and their parents, remembering their school, their age, whether they have siblings or friends playing in league, whether they are new to sports or new to ultimate specifically, whether they are native English speakers or perhaps need language support, whether they have

friends on their team or if they're in fact seeking community through ultimate, and whether they have particular financial, educational, social, emotional needs...These are difference-makers in helping kids, families, and teams feel seen, valued, and known.

**As stated above, the current plan is to hold TUSC365 Spring League at East Metropolitan Park in Manor, TX. However, TUSC365 also has relationships with St. Edward's University, Westlake High School, Round Rock Multi-Purpose Complex, and St. Stephen's School, and has held events at all of those locations in the past.** In the event that East Metro is less available (or entirely unavailable), we would have a list of additional options to pursue. We are also committed to rotating locations for our events throughout the year to make various programming increasingly accessible and inclusive for players from all over central Texas, minimizing the barrier of transportation as much as possible.

### **TIMELINESS & COMMUNICATION:**

**TUSC365 Spring League will be announced in late December / early January, following our**

**pre-season coaches meeting and a strategizing/planning discussion with the AU Board representative.** Registration will open between January 15th and 22nd. We will communicate regarding TUSC365 Spring League through our existing TUSC365 email list (which includes registered players, coaches, and schools from 2022 as well as from TUSC365's summer and fall programming). We will communicate directly with school administrators, teachers, counselors, coaches, and parent groups to help spread the word, guide coaches on how and when to communicate with their teams, and reach out to parents / families directly. We will also announce via TUSC365's social media platforms, and propose that Austin Ultimate communicate via their channels (i.e. the Scoober, email list, and social media) should we enter into this relationship between our two organizations.

**In 2022 TUSC365 conducted direct outreach to multiple schools, attending their practices to announce TUSC365 Spring League, answer questions, and support players and coaches in the registration process. We plan to offer that service in 2023 as well, and to layer in the additional opportunity for community members to attend TUSC365 Office Hours where they can ask questions and seek clarity about our plans.**

### **TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE 2023: SUSTAINABILITY**

**TUSC365 believes that our spring league - and youth Ultimate in general - relies on five essential elements:**

1. Full-Time Year-Round Attention
2. Professional Experience Working with Youth, Families, and Schools / Educators
3. Consistent, Personal Relationships and Responsiveness
4. Compensation, Training, and Accountability for Coaches & Staff
5. Fun, Competitive, Safe, Reliable Opportunities to Play

**TUSC365 delivers (and has historically delivered) on all five of these pillars, and has followed through on every one of our stated goals for 2022 and the bullets outlined in our MOU with Austin Ultimate, and are poised to grow and improve in 2023.** Spring League is an essential part of our business, and we consider it paramount for the health and sustainability of Youth Ultimate in Austin. We know that a successful youth spring league is not limited to three months of the year. Year-round communication, programming, recruitment, and support are essential to the health and sustainability of TUSC365 Spring League; as such, the work for our spring league occurs all months of the year. We are also aware that the work during the specific spring league season is all-encompassing, requiring commitment during nights, weekends, and full-time days. Our staff is available for parents, players, school faculty and staff, and coaches at all times throughout the season (and in the off-season as well).

**TUSC365's vision for supporting YSL and for growing youth ultimate in Austin involves continuing the good work that we already do, as stated in our Vision & Planning document (shared with AU in December 2021):**

**Spring:**

- Youth Spring League

- Elementary Pick-up/Play  
Communication re: USA Ultimate Events and Requirements and Youth Club Championship (YCC) Opportunities

#### Summer:

- Camps (two weeks, Monday-Friday, day and overnight options when possible)
- YCC Support: Practices, Coaches, Administrative Structure, Communication
- Organized Pick-up Support (if possible)

#### Fall:

- Clinic(s)
- Hat League
- Coach Training & Development
- Tournament(s)
- Off-Season Training: Skills, Agility, Strength & Fitness, Injury Prevention (*Individual, Team, and Small Group*)
- Team Mentoring, Development, Recruitment
- *Elementary Programming – Support for AU Initiatives*

#### Winter:

- Team Mentoring, Development, Recruitment
- Ultimate Education (i.e. rules, opportunities and levels of play, networking and outreach)
- Leadership & Coach Training
- School-Based Pre-Season Tournament
- Skills Training/Agility/Strength & Fitness/Injury Prevention (*Individual, Team, and Small Group*)

*Team mentoring, development, and recruitment, in this case, refers to DIRECT INTERVENTION to onboard new programs and revive teams that collapsed in the years leading up to and during the pandemic. This requires outreach to school administrators, parents, teachers, coaches, and families. At the time of this proposal, TUSC365 has engaged with representatives from at least eight of these currently-dormant programs.*

#### **COACH RETENTION**

**Coach retention relies on open communication, responsive support (recognizing that all coaches and teams have different needs and strengths), opportunities for coaches to provide feedback directly to the TUSC365 leadership, adequate and fair compensation, and ongoing training and encouragement.** TUSC365 also believes that good coaches are essential to growing our programs and our sport, and that taking care of our coaches in big and small ways (such as feeding them on long tournament days, or providing them with gear and equipment) helps them feel valued, respected, and appreciated. We also seek out coach input and feedback at every opportunity to ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are met.

**TUSC365 pays its coaches \$20-\$25/hour, depending on their level of experience and training.** Returning coaches, certified coaches, and certified teachers receive \$25/hour. We also compensate coaches for training hours (i.e. SafeSport), and reimburse them for costs incurred

for requirements such as background checks. Austin youth ultimate has seen reduction in teams over the years when a dedicated coach has to step away for their families, to take another (paying) job, or to set boundaries regarding their time. Many of our coaches are also teachers, counselors, parents, or players themselves with an expensive college or club season ahead of them. Compensating these professionals ensures that they do not have to sacrifice their love for coaching due to real-life circumstances and needs such as budget and time commitments.

*Note: Certified teachers generally receive \$30+ / hour for supplemental pay outside of school hours. In TUSC365's research of other youth ultimate communities, \$20/hour was the standard base-rate for coach compensation.*

*Note: Our budget accounts for ONE coaching allotment per team. That means that if a school has two teams, they will receive two allotments; if a school has one team, they will receive one. However, every school/team has a slightly different structure; in some cases, coaches might divide responsibilities between multiple coaches, and as such split the coaching compensation. Regardless, every coach of record is required to complete their SafeSport certification and background check, and will be compensated / reimbursed for those requirements. We are also unable to account for additional practice hours, if coaches choose to run more than one practice / week for their teams. Raising that stipend amount would raise the regular price for participation, and many teams only conduct one practice per week. TUSC365 welcomes discussion and feedback on this topic, especially from our coaches.*

**Administrative and organizational support leading into and during the TUSC365 Spring League season may include any of the following:**

- Practice Field Reservations
- Advocacy with School Administrators
- Parent Communication
- Jersey/Uniform Orders
- Practice Attendance / Management
- YSL Announcement at Practices & Registration Assistance
- Translation / Language Support
- Discussion of Team Fee / School-Supported Program Costs
- New Player Recruitment, Outreach, and Advertising

#### **REGARDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**Covid-19 is not our last crisis or challenge. In order to provide responsive, adaptable programming for youth ultimate players, teams, and families in the face of obstacles - both known and unknown - we need an organization and staff with dedicated, full-time focus and expertise working with kids.** The youth ultimate programming across the country that came back first during the pandemic did so because they had that model in place; they had the means and the motivation to do it safely and creatively.

AU (UPLA) has provided thoughtful, selfless, consistent programming for all levels of ultimate in Austin for over a decade. However, as an organization composed entirely of volunteers, and individuals who are not elected to their positions, AU did not have the resources, time, experience, or understanding of the specific impact on the youth community to adapt and engage with youth players, families, or coaches during the Coronavirus Pandemic. This doesn't

change the positive work that AU did for youth ultimate prior to Covid-19, but it does illuminate the limitations that already existed within the organization's model and structure with regard to youth ultimate.

TUSC365 offers the experience, exclusive attention, resources, and creative problem-solving skills and vision to ensure that it can adapt to obstacles both known and unknown, ensuring sustainability even in the face of potential challenges and crises.

**TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE 2023: TRANSPARENCY  
OPEN COMMUNICATION:**

**WITH AUSTIN ULTIMATE AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY**  
TUSC365 has shared, and will continue to share, the following information with Austin Ultimate and the larger Ultimate Community:

- Spring League registration numbers
- Spring League current / active teams
- Spring League previous teams
- Spring League coach status, experience, and affiliation  
*(Note that we will not share coach name and contact information publicly, in order to protect our valuable and often spread-thin teachers, parents, and staff members.)*

**Additionally, TUSC365 will share the following information with Austin Ultimate:**

- Spring League price per player
- Spring League player registration information (name, email) with express permission / subscription to Austin Ultimate's Youth Listserve

**TUSC365 will share this information using the following methods:**

- Posted on TUSC Website (public non-confidential information)
- In direct response to inquiries (i.e. via email, phone, office hours, in person) (public, non-confidential information only)
- Direct communication / coach representation to parent and player groups (public, non-confidential information only)
- Monthly meetings between TUSC365 and AU representatives, as outlined in above
- Via the agreed-upon digital platform / method between our organizations

**OPEN COMMUNICATION:  
REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

TUSC agrees to give all registrants for TUSC365 Spring League (and all other TUSC events) the option to "opt-in" to AU's Youth Email List so that AU will be able to rebuild its database of local youth players. This would be similar to how all businesses collect contact information that would be shared or used for marketing purposes, in compliance with the [CAN-SPAM Act](#).

The emails collected would be used only for promoting AU's own youth programming (ie, a separate email list than the general AU email list) and to raise awareness about Austin Ultimate's organization. It's very important to both of our organizations that AU has direct



contact with its youth constituents, and this should capture all of those Spring League participants who desire that connection. TUSC365 would seek AU approval / input on how the “opt-in” would read and look in registration.

#### **INFORMATION - SHARING:**

##### **FINANCES**

TUSC365 agrees to share “price per paid” for each player, in as much as that information is available. In some cases, players registered at one set full-team price (as described in the TUSC365 report to Austin Ultimate in May of 2022 as well as this RFP), so the exact price per player may appear as an average when in fact players submitted different prices to their schools or coaches. TUSC365 does not have access to that information, and is reluctant to request it from schools based on their own policies regarding equity, access, and player confidentiality. TUSC365 is willing to discuss and outline this specific information-sharing line-item in a more collaborative setting.

With regard to additional financial information, TUSC365 is eager to ensure transparency and communication with Austin Ultimate and all of its community, but seeks greater specificity and understanding of which particular information is desired moving forward. TUSC365 also asks that ample time be allowed for that information to be collected, aggregated, and disseminated (given current active programming and other barriers such as ongoing player registration etc.).

Regardless of the nature of these conversations, TUSC365 seeks to maintain a positive, intentional, constructive tone and asks for the same in return from Austin Ultimate. Please see “areas of growth” above, with regard to relationship-building, trust, and the nature of this transitional time for both organizations.

#### **HISTORY AND CONTEXT:**

##### **YOUTH SPRING LEAGUE REGISTRATION NUMBERS**

- 2018 UPLA Youth Spring League Participation: 600
- 2019 UPLA Youth Spring League Participation: 500 (17% Reduction)
- 2020: No UPLA Youth Spring League or UPLA Youth Programming / Engagement
  - *\*TUSC ran low-cost virtual programming 3-5 days / week throughout the summer of 2020, and multiple free virtual “youth ultimate roundtables” throughout the winter months in 2020-2021.*
- 2021: No UPLA Youth Spring League or UPLA Youth Programming / Engagement
  - *\*School-based sports and most recreational club sports returned to play*
  - *\*Youth ultimate parents and coaches began requesting a return to play*
  - *\*TUSC ran a half-day in-person camp in June 2021, with UPLA’s approval, and with robust Covid protocol in place.*

#### **HISTORY AND CONTEXT:**

##### **DORMANT YOUTH SPRING LEAGUE TEAMS**

The following teams collapsed due to coach and player-leader departure without adequate

support or communication to replace those individuals, and lack of engagement / programming during the pandemic:

- McCallum High School
- Hays High School
- Griffin School
- Hutto High School
- Westwood High School
- Henrickson High School
- Hyde Park High School
- O. Henry Middle School
- Lamar Middle School
- Murchison Middle School (pre-pandemic)
- Burnet Middle School (pre-pandemic)
- Canyon Vista Middle School (pre-pandemic)
- Hill Country Middle School (pre-pandemic)

#### **HISTORY AND CONTEXT:**

#### **ESTIMATED YOUTH PLAYERS LOST PRIOR TO AND DURING THE PANDEMIC**

- Anticipated 17% reduction (referring back to 2018-2019): **70 Players**
- 2 Graduating Classes, without recruiting classes to replace them: **140 Players**
- Rough estimate of players who left Ultimate in favor of sports that had returned to play: **70 Players (approximately 10 players per grade level, across the district/city)**

*Note: by the fall of 2021, school-based UIL sports in Austin and across the country had returned to play with safety protocol in place, as had many/most club and recreational programs. Ultimate communities such as BUDA, The Triangle, BADA, Colorado, and more had also re-introduced youth events with reasonable precautions in place. With that in mind, players, coaches, schools and families began asking for youth ultimate programming to return in Austin.*

*During TUSC's roundtable discussions with youth players, coaches, and parents in the winter of 2020-2021, teams requested opportunities to return to play in some capacity. Citing other sports and other youth ultimate communities, those teams and individuals expressed concern that Austin youth ultimate was on the verge of collapse and that they had been "left behind" without proper support or communication.*

*TUSC offered to assist UPLA with the implementation of safe return to play in spring of 2021, drawing on Coach Kepner's experience with COVID safety in the public schools – i.e. skills challenges, small-group training opportunities ("pods"), tiered events based on Austin Public Health Guidelines, etc. UPLA declined that support and did not offer any youth programming throughout the 2020-2021 academic year or the fall of 2021.*

- Remaining / anticipated for YSL in 2022, not including the loss of teams listed above: **220 Players**
- Estimated number of players lost due to team withdrawal (see above, 8 teams x 17 players per roster): **136 Players**

## **HISTORY AND CONTEXT:**

### **ACTUAL TUSC365 SPRING LEAGUE REGISTRATION NUMBERS (2022)**

- 363 REGISTERED PLAYERS
- 8 Middle School Teams, representing 12 different schools (some programs combined), including one new team/program
- 10 High School Teams, representing 14 different schools (some programs combined), including one new team/program

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- [Website: Texas Ultimate Summer Camp || TUSC365](#)
- [TUSC365 Spring League Details and Registration Page](#)
- [Screen Shots: TUSC365 Spring League Checkout Screen \(2022\)](#)
- [Sample Email \(Spring 2022\)](#)
- TUSC Instagram: @tusculiti
- TUSC Twitter: @tusculiti
- [Without Limits / Girls Ultimate Movement High School Girls Resource Manual](#)
- 2022 TUSC365 Photography (by Matthew Brooks): [TUSC365 Spring League](#)
- 2022 TUSC365 Spring League Videography (shot and edited by David “Hoag” Kepner / Dream Studios ATX): [2022 TUSC365 Spring League Highlight Reel](#)
- Additional Media for TUSC365 year-round programming [HERE](#)