2020 ANNUAL YEARBOOK

SPECIAL SECTION: Celebration of SAAC
Life in the Balance

Division II supports the educational mission of college athletics by fostering a balanced and inclusive approach in which student-athletes learn and develop through their desired academic pursuits, in civic engagement with their communities and in athletics competition. Division II gives student-athletes the unique opportunity to compete in the classroom, on the field, in their career, for their causes, and on their terms.

23 conferences | 310 active members | 4 schools in membership process

ENROLLMENT AT DIVISION II ACTIVE MEMBERS

- 2.6% of active members are institutions with more than 15,000 students
- 9% of active members are institutions with 7,500-14,999 students
- 35.8% of active members are institutions with 2,500-7,499 students
- 52.6% of active members are institutions with fewer than 2,500 students

COMPOSITION OF ENROLLMENT

- Women: 57% of undergraduate enrollment, 51,104 student-athletes, 8.6 average number of sports sponsored
- Men: 43% of undergraduate enrollment, 70,710 student-athletes, 7.3 average number of sports sponsored

TYPE OF SCHOOL

- 48% public schools
- 52% private schools

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

- Schools with football: 467 schools, 288 men, 179 women
- Schools without football: 307 schools, 159 men, 148 women

MEDIAN TOTAL EXPENSES

- 1st quartile of schools (with football): $10.9 million, (without football): $9 million
- 2nd quartile of schools (with football): $7.9 million, (without football): $6.6 million
- 3rd quartile of schools (with football): $6.5 million, (without football): $5 million
- 4th quartile of schools (with football): $4.1 million, (without football): $3.3 million

Overall median expenses: $6.6 million

CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Men’s Championships: 12 events, 7,234 participants total
- Women’s Championships: 13 events, 7,060 participants total

GRADUATION RATES

- 50% student body federal rate
- 58% student-athlete federal rate
- 73% academic success rate

CONFERENCES

Division II supports 23 conferences, 310 active members, and 4 schools in membership process.
INTRODUCTION

Let’s hear it for the student-athlete voice!

Every year in this space I talk about how proud I am of our division for one thing or another. Well I’m going to do it again, and this time it’s all about our student-athletes. It’s been 31 years since the NCAA adopted a national Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and just over 20 since the divisions created their own SAACs to align with the federated governance structure established in 1997. We have devoted a special section in this yearbook that celebrates the past, present and future of SAAC (see page 48).

I’m proud to say that I was a SAAC member myself. When I played volleyball at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Division I was just starting to require all schools to establish a SAAC. We had to start from scratch to organize ourselves and develop policies and initiatives that made us a relevant and meaningful contributor to how the campus operated. I am thankful that my coach appointed me to this body as a freshman, and I served all four years, including as president the last two. During that time, we found ways to recognize student-athlete achievement, honor faculty who supported the student-athletes and their experience, and meet regularly with our president.

Looking back, having been a part of something that was just developing makes me understand just how important it is for student-athletes to be heard and why it is important to have a voice – and to use that voice. Developing operations and policies is probably why I like governance so much today!

I can’t overstate what SAAC contributes to Division II. Much of what makes us unique can be attributed directly to them, including our relationship with the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the development of the Make It Yours brand enhancement, both of which were completely SAAC-driven.

In my interactions with the Division II SAAC, members are always prepared and thoughtful, and they work collectively to understand the nuances and think critically about any concept being considered. They’re always asking why we do what we do, not to be pesky or critical, but to make us better as a functioning governance structure that adheres to its mission, which is to provide student-athletes with the best possible collegiate experience and prepare them to be successful after they graduate.

To accomplish that goal, the student-athlete voice is critical. We intentionally incorporate the SAAC as voting members in our committee structure and in our Convention proceedings. And they engage fully, not for their own interests, but to ensure that all student-athletes are supported and treated fairly.

SAAC members understand that having a voice comes with a responsibility to be prepared and speak up during deliberations. Recent SAACs have strengthened that voice by creating the Super Region Convention model and developing a network that enhances communication throughout the campus and conference SAACs.

I am confident that every Division II chancellor/president, AD, SWA, FAR and coach would agree that the SAAC members on their own campuses represent the best and brightest in their student-athlete population. Simply put, the SAAC structure makes us better as a division, and I can’t be more thankful to both support them and be supported by them. It’s a fantastic win-win relationship!
2020 DIVISION II YEARBOOK CHAMPIONSHIPS
The atmosphere was electric during the 2019 Division II Wrestling Championships at the Wolstein Center on the campus of Cleveland State University. Here, Carlos Jacquez (left) of Lindenwood wrestles against Josh Portillo of Nebraska-Kearney in the 125lb final in front of a large crowd and beneath the banners of the participating teams. Jacquez would go on to win this match, and St. Cloud State would win its second consecutive team title.

JAY LAPRETE/NCAA PHOTOS

**WINTER CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**WRESTLING**

**TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)**
1. St. Cloud State, 95.5
2. Wheeling, 87.5
3. McKendree, 83
4. Notre Dame (Ohio), 77.5
5. Nebraska-Kearney, 71

**INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS**

**125 POUNDS**
Carlos Jacquez, Lindenwood, def. Josh Portillo, Nebraska-Kearney (Dec. 5-3)

**133 POUNDS**
Tyler Warner, Wheeling, def. Wesley Dawkins, Nebraska-Kearney (Dec. 4-1)

**141 POUNDS**
Jose Rodriguez, Notre Dame (Ohio) def. Isaiah Royal, Newberry (MD 16-5)

**149 POUNDS**
Chris Eddins Jr., Pittsburgh-Johnstown, def. Trey Grine, Tiffin (Dec. 7-2)

**157 POUNDS**
Matt Malcolm, Nebraska-Kearney, def. Colin Ayers, Augustana (South Dakota) (Dec. 9-4)

**165 POUNDS**
Shane Ruhnke, Millersville, def. Rodney Shepard, UNC Pembroke (DQ)

**174 POUNDS**
Connor Craig, Wheeling, def. Nick Foster, McKendree (Dec. 6-2)

**184 POUNDS**
Michael Pixley, McKendree, def. Tony Vezzetti, Notre Dame (Ohio) (Dec. 4-1)

**197 POUNDS**
Nicholas Mason, Tiffin, def. Vince Dietz, St. Cloud State (Dec 5-2)

**HEAVYWEIGHT**
Andrew Dunn, Kutztown, def. Jarrod Hinrichs, Nebraska-Kearney (Dec. 2-1)

**ELITE 90 HONOREE: Josh Portillo, Sophomore, Nebraska-Kearney, Health and Physical Education, 3.97 GPA**

Shane Ruhnke (right) of Millersville battles UNC Pembroke’s Rodney Shepard on his way to winning the 165lb championship match. Before the match, Marauders coach Kerry Regner told Ruhnke to “go pour iron,” referring to Ruhnke’s summer job in an iron refinery. “You hear me say ‘pour iron’ with this guy,” Regner said after the match. “That job is hard, and not many people are able to do it, so wrestle at a level or temperature that other people are not willing to. If you are going at a temperature of 2,450 degrees (Ruhnke poured liquid iron heated to 2,450 degrees into molds), how many opponents are willing to go that far?”

“Wrestling is a battle,” Ruhnke said after becoming the first Millersville wrestler to win a national championship since 1980. “There are definitely some spots that you think, ‘I’m tired and can’t do anymore,’ but then I just think having those life experiences, I can push a little harder than the guy I am wrestling against and I can go a little further than him.”

JAY LAPRETE/NCAA PHOTOS
The Lubbock Christian bench erupts during a tense moment late in the Lady Chaps’ double-overtime thriller against Southwestern Oklahoma State. Lubbock Christian head coach Steve Gomez said after the game, “Just don’t wake me up. I don’t know if this is actually real, what this team did.”

JAY LAPRETE/NCAA PHOTOS

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

ELITE EIGHT
Indiana (Pennsylvania) 73, Azusa Pacific 60
Southwestern Oklahoma State 71, Saint Anselm 61
Drury 91, Nova Southeastern 60
Lubbock Christian 99, North Georgia 54

SEMIFINALS
Southwestern Oklahoma State 66, Indiana (Pennsylvania) 57
Lubbock Christian 69, Drury 60

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Lubbock Christian 95, Southwestern Oklahoma State 85 (2 ot)

ELITE 90 HONOREE:
Megan Piggot, Senior,
Nova Southeastern,
Business Administration, 4.0 GPA

Maddi Chitsey of Lubbock Christian rises high above Tyra Aska of Southwestern Oklahoma State to score two of her 22 points in the Division II Women’s Basketball Championship game. Chitsey’s three-pointer tied the game at the end of the first overtime and the Lady Chaps outscored the Bulldogs by 10 in the second extra period to win their second title in four years.

JAY LAPRETE/NCAA PHOTOS

Southwestern Oklahoma State’s Bethany Franks (left) establishes a formidable blockade against Lubbock Christian’s Caitlyn Cunyus during the championship game. Franks was a force on offense as well, scoring 25 points for the Bulldogs.

JAY LAPRETE/NCAA PHOTOS
Northwest Missouri State's Diego Bernard drives for two of his 14 points in the Division II Men's Basketball Championship game. The Elite Eight in Evansville attracted 18,870 fans, the largest total since the dawn of the event in 1989, the largest single-site total since 1971. The championship game was played before a crowd of 4,269.

A.J. MAST/NCAA PHOTOS

**MEN’S BASKETBALL**

**ELITE EIGHT**
Saint Anselm 91, Nova Southeastern 81
Northwest Missouri State 55, Mercyhurst 51
Southern Indiana 94, West Texas A&M 84
Point Loma 87, Queens (North Carolina) 74

**SEMIFINALS**
Point Loma 81, Southern Indiana 71
Northwest Missouri State 76, Saint Anselm 53

**CHAMPIONSHIP GAME**
Northwest Missouri State 64, Point Loma 58

**ELITE 90 HONOREE:** Tanner Nelson, Senior, Point Loma, Business Administration, 3.98 GPA

Northwest Missouri State head coach Ben McCollum proudly displays the championship trophy after his Bearcats completed a 38-0 season by defeating Point Loma, 64-58, in the title game. The Bearcats became just the fifth Division II team to complete an unbeaten season as champion.

A.J. MAST/NCAA PHOTOS

Division II Player of the Year Daulton Hommes scored a game-high 26 points but could not propel the Sea Lions to their first crown.

A.J. MAST/NCAA PHOTOS
MEN’S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Ashland, 38
2. Adams State, 37
3. Tiffin, 34
4. Grand Valley State, 33.25
5. Academy of Art, 29

Lincoln (Missouri), 29

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS

60-METER DASH
Jonte Baker, Tiffin, 6.62

200-METER DASH
Mobolade Ajomale, Academy of Art, 20.88

400-METER DASH
Myles Pringle, Ashland, 45.67 (meet record; old record 45.93, Pringle, 3/10/2018)

800-METER RUN
Thomas Staines, Colorado State-Pueblo, 1:48.64

MILE RUN
Felix Wammetsberger, Queens (North Carolina), 4:11.18

3,000-METER RUN
Elias Gedeyon, Adams State, 8:05.90.

5,000-METER RUN
Sydney Gidabuday, Adams State, 13:46.34

60-METER HIGH HURDLES
Charles Forbes, Colorado-Colorado Springs, 7.89

1,600-METER RELAY
Texas A&M-Commerce (Gabriel Peterson, Stadrian Taylor, D’Lance Sharp, Rashard Clark), 3:08.34

DISTANCE MEDLEY RELAY
Colorado State-Pueblo (Patrick Scoggins, Shawn Horne, Devundrick Walker, Thomas Staines), 9:47.91

HIGH JUMP
Isaiah Kyle, Wingate, 2.18 (7-1 ¾)

POLE VAULT
Vincent Hobbie, Central Missouri, 5.36 (17-7)

LONG JUMP
Isaac Grimes, Chadron State 7.84 (25-8 ½)

TRIPLE JUMP
Ryan Brown, Lincoln (Missouri), 16.01 (52-6 ½)

SHOT PUT
Eldred Henry, Findlay, 20.18 (66-2 ½) [meet record; old record 19.8 (64-1 ½), Kurt Roberts, Ashland, 3/13/2010]

WEIGHT THROW
Austin Combs, Findlay, 21.22 (69-7 ½)

HEPTATHLON
Valentine Charles, Texas A&M-Kingsville, 5,642

THE RIBBON-DRAPE ADAMS STATE GRIZZLIES CELEBRATE THEIR FOURTH NCAA DIVISION II WOMEN’S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM TITLE.

The Grizzlies won three individual events and the distance medley relay to compile the highest point total for a champion since 2012.

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS

60-METER DASH
Dianna Johnson, Adams State, 7.21

200-METER DASH
Kandise Thomas, Adams State, 23.57

400-METER DASH
Shannon Kalawan, Saint Augustine’s, 53.74

800-METER RUN
Skylyn Webb, Colorado-Colorado Springs, 2:04.9 (meet record; old record 2:05.21, Carsyn Koch, Cedarville, 3/12/2016)

MILE RUN
Stephanie Cotter, Adams State, 4:50.27

3,000-METER RUN
Caroline Kurget, Alaska Anchorage, 9:15.45 (meet record; old record 9:16.81, Emily Oren, Hillsdale, 3/14/2015)

5,000-METER RUN
Caroline Kurget, Alaska Anchorage, 16:06.37 (meet record; old record 16:07.28, Rachael Patterson, Grand Valley State, 3/10/2012)

60-METER HURDLES
Danielle Kohlwey, Minnesota Duluth, 8.28

1,600-METER RELAY

DISTANCE MEDLEY RELAY

HIGH JUMP
Yashira Rhymes-Stuart, Bellarmine, 1.77 (5-9 ¼)

POLE VAULT
Haven Landers, Pittsburg State, 4.03 (13-2 ½)

LONG JUMP
Lauren Fairchild, Colorado State-Pueblo, 6.12 (20-1)

TRIPLE JUMP
Camille Jouanno, Academy of Art, 12.93 (42-5 ¼)

SHOT PUT
Suntfower Greene, Millersville, 16.23 (53-3)

WEIGHT THROW
Bobbi Goodwin, Grand Valley State, 20.75 (68-1)

PENTATHLON
Olivia Montez-Brown, Augustana (South Dakota), 3,915

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Levi Wyrick, Junior, Pittsburg State, Physical Education, 4.0 GPA

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Haven Landers, Sophomore, Pittsburg State, English, 4.0 GPA

The ribbon-draped Adams State Grizzlies celebrate their fourth NCAA Division II Women’s Indoor Track and Field Championships title. The Grizzlies won three individual events and the distance medley relay to compile the highest point total for a champion since 2012.
Polina Lapshina of Queens (North Carolina) is on her way to winning the 100-yard freestyle during the Division II Women’s Swimming and Diving Championships in Indianapolis. Lapshina won three individual events to help the Royals win their fifth straight team title with 707.5 points, only the second time a team has exceeded the 700-point mark in the history of the meet (Truman compiled 733 in 2002). The Royals’ margin of victory over second-place Drury (362.5 points) was the widest ever.

JOE ROBBINS/NCAA PHOTOS

WOMEN’S SWIMMING AND DIVING

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Queens (North Carolina), 707.5
2. Drury, 345
3. West Chester, 249
4. Nova Southeastern, 213.5
5. Tampa, 207.5

ELITE 90 HONOREE:
Catalina Berraud-Galea,
Senior, Lynn, Sport Management, 4.0 GPA

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS

50-YARD FREESTYLE
Polina Lapshina, Queens (North Carolina), 22.34

100-YARD FREESTYLE
Polina Lapshina, Queens (North Carolina), 48.16 (meet record; old record 48.44, Theresa Michalek, West Florida, 3/9/2017)

200-YARD FREESTYLE
Randi Yarnell, Western Colorado, 1:47.28

500-YARD FREESTYLE
Georgia Wright, West Chester, 4:48.33

1,000-YARD FREESTYLE
Georgia Wright, West Chester, 9:45.86 (meet record; old record 9:48.87, Wright, 3/8/2017)

1,650-YARD FREESTYLE
Georgia Wright, West Chester, 16:20.05

100-YARD BACKSTROKE
Polina Lapshina, Queens (North Carolina), 52.12 (Note: Lapshina set a meet record of 52.07 in the first leg of the 400-yard medley relay the day before the 100-yard backstroke race. Both that time and her time in the 100-yard backstroke bested the old record of 52.45 set by Mary Hanson of California Baptist on 3/14/2014.)

200-YARD BACKSTROKE
Bobbi Gichard, Queens (North Carolina), 1:55.08

100-YARD BREASTSTROKE
Bailee Nunn, Drury, 59.94

200-YARD BREASTSTROKE
Bailee Nunn, Drury, 2:09.67

100-YARD BUTTERFLY
Polina Lapshina, Queens (North Carolina), 52.16 (meet record; old record 52.33, Theresa Michalek, West Florida, 3/9/2017)

200-YARD BUTTERFLY
Tori Sopp, Drury, 1:57.19

200-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY
Bailee Nunn, Drury, 1:57.97

400-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY
Hannah Kastigar, Northern State, 4:11.15

ONE-METER DIVING
Nadia Mulder, West Chester, 467.75

THREE-METER DIVING
Christina Sather, Clarion, 515.60

200-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Polina Lapshina, Kyrie Dobson, Wanda Dollmayer, Shelly Prayson), 1:30.19

400-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY

200-YARD MEDLEY RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Rachel Massaro, Shelly Prayson, Georgia DaCruz, Francesca Bains), 1:39.58

400-YARD MEDLEY RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Polina Lapshina, Kylee Dobson, Wanda Dollmayer, Shelly Prayson), 3:18.04 (Note: The time of 3:18.04 ties the meet record set by the Queens (North Carolina) foursome of McKenzie Stevens, Kyrie Dobson, Wanda Dollmayer and Michelle Prayson on 3/17/18.)

800-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Josephina Lorda, Lexie Baker, Georgia DaCruz, Francesca Bains), 7:16.20

200-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Rachel Massaro, Shelly Prayson, Georgia DaCruz, Kyrie Dobson), 1:39.58 (meet record, old record 1:39.65, Queens (North Carolina) (Massaro, Michelle Prayson, DaCruz, Dobson), 3/14/2018)

400-YARD MEDLEY RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Polina Lapshina, Shelly Prayson, Georgia DaCruz, Kyrie Dobson), 3:35.70 (meet record; old record 3:37.80, Wingate (Viktoriya Arkhipova, Jesika Weiss, Armony Dumur, Sofia Petrenko), 3/10/2016)

Christina Sather continued Clarion’s dominance off the boards, showing her winning form in the 3-meter event. Sather placed third in the 1-meter behind West Chester’s Nadia Mulder and teammate Emma Kehn.

JOE ROBBINS/NCAA PHOTOS

West Chester’s distance freestyle specialist Georgia Wright reacts after seeing her time in the 1,650-yard event. While not a meet record, Wright’s 16:20.05 was better than her winning times in 2017 and 2018. Wright did set a meet record in winning the 1,000 free for the third straight year and also won the 500 for the first time.

JOE ROBBINS/NCAA PHOTOS
MEN’S SWIMMING AND DIVING

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Queens (North Carolina), 606
2. Delta State, 364.5
3. UIndy, 305
4. Wayne State (Michigan), 238.5
5. Grand Valley State, 222

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS

50-YARD FREESTYLE
Brody Heck, Queens (North Carolina), 19.47

100-YARD FREESTYLE
Marius Kusch, Queens (North Carolina), 41.73 (meet record; old record 42.42, Kusch, 3/17/2018)

200-YARD FREESTYLE
Alex Kunert, Queens (North Carolina), 1:33.56

500-YARD FREESTYLE
Alex Sobers, Emmanuel (Georgia), 4:21.09

1,000-YARD FREESTYLE
Alex Kunert, Queens (North Carolina), 8:56.76 (meet record; old record 8:57.06, Mitch Snyder, Drury, 3/11/2009)

1,650-YARD FREESTYLE
Adam Rosipal, UIndy, 15:06.39

100-YARD BACKSTROKE
Marius Kusch, Queens (North Carolina), 45.09 (meet record; old record 45.88, Paul Pjulet, Queens (North Carolina), 3/16/2018)

200-YARD BACKSTROKE
Harry Shalamon, Grand Valley State, 1:42.46

100-YARD BREASTSTROKE
Sasha Palazzo, Wayne State (Michigan), 52.24

200-YARD BREASTSTROKE
Henrik Dahrendorff, Saint Leo, 1:56.09

100-YARD BUTTERFLY
Marius Kusch, Queens (North Carolina), 44.32 (meet record; old record 44.89, Matthew Josa, Queens (North Carolina), 3/12/2015)

200-YARD BUTTERFLY
Alex Kunert, Queens (North Carolina), 1:41.19 (meet record; old record 1:42.04, Marius Kusch, Queens (North Carolina), 3/10/2017)

200-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY
Marius Kusch, Queens (North Carolina), 1:41.61 (meet record; old record 1:41.94, Matthew Josa, Queens (North Carolina), 3/11/2015)

400-YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY
Matthew Holmes, Florida Southern, 3:47.48

ONE-METER DIVING
Ammar Hassan, Colorado Mesa, 581.40

THREE-METER DIVING
Ammar Hassan, Colorado Mesa, 593.10

200-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Skyler Cook-Weeks, Brody Heck, Dmytro Sydorchenko, Ruben Starn), 1:18.37

400-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Marius Kusch, Alex Kunert, Alen Mosic, Brody Heck), 2:49.98 (meet record; old record 2:53.00 Queens (North Carolina) (Marius Kusch, Dion Dreesens, Ben Mayes, Nicholas Arakelian), 3/11/2017)

800-YARD FREESTYLE RELAY

200-YARD MEDLEY RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Alen Mosic, Jan Delkeskamp, Marius Kusch, Brody Heck), 1:25.22

400-YARD MEDLEY RELAY
Queens (North Carolina) (Marius Kusch, Jan Delkeskamp, Alex Kunert, Brody Heck), 3:08.15

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Kyle Weesner, Junior, Delta State, Biology, 4.0 GPA

The Queens (North Carolina) Royals celebrate their fifth straight Division II Men’s Swimming and Diving Championships team title after winning 13 of the meet’s 21 events, including all five relays. Marius Kusch, a senior, won four individual events, a feat to be matched by only 12 others in the 56-year history of the championships. Kusch now has 10 individual event wins for his career, tying him with only three other swimmers who have compiled that many over time.

JOE ROBBINS/NCAA PHOTOS
WOMEN’S ROWING

TEAM STANDINGS
1. Central Oklahoma, 30
2. Florida Tech, 23
3. Western Washington, 22
4. Seattle Pacific, 13
5. Jefferson, 8
6. UC San Diego, 7

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Bailee Thomas, Senior, Central Oklahoma, Psychology, 4.0 GPA

EVENT RESULTS

EIGHTS GRAND FINAL
1. Central Oklahoma [Cameron Blunk (8), Laura Francis (7), Megan Dwarshuis (6), Eileen Anderson (5), Erica Mitchell (4), Bailee Thomas (3), Kiele Erickson (2), Siobhan Quirke (1); Madisyn Kitchell (coxswain)], 6:33.011
2. Florida Tech, 6:37.088
3. Western Washington, 6:43.504
4. Seattle Pacific, 6:43.651

FOURS GRAND FINAL
1. Central Oklahoma [Shelby Wackerly (4), Alexandra Nakvinda (3), Lauren Wall (2), Savanna Hammonds (1); Blair Johnson (coxswain)], 7:27.026
2. Western Washington, 7:31.086
3. Florida Tech, 7:32.884
4. Seattle Pacific, 7:37.855

Central Oklahoma coach Montia Rice praises his happy Broncho crew after they won both Grand Finals and breezed to a second consecutive team title in the Division II Rowing Championships.

JUSTIN TAFOYA/NCAA PHOTOS

The Central Oklahoma eights crew (foreground) stay in front of eventual runner-up Florida Tech.

JUSTIN TAFOYA/NCAA PHOTOS
WOMEN’S GOLF

QUARTERFINALS
Florida Tech def. Findlay, 3-2
Barry def. Southwestern Oklahoma State, 3-2
Cal State San Marcos def. DBU 3-2
UIndy def. Limestone, 2-2-1 (via stroke tiebreaker)

SEMIFINALS
Cal State San Marcos def. UIndy, 3-2
Florida Tech def. Southwestern Oklahoma State, 3-2

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
Florida Tech def. Cal State San Marcos, 4-1

INDIVIDUAL STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Jamie Jacob, Cal State San Marcos, 72-72-75 – 219
2. Gloria Choi, Southwestern Oklahoma State, 72-73-75 – 220
3. Lucy Eaton, Florida Tech, 77-70-75 – 222
4. Anahi Servin, Academy of Art, 73-71-79 – 223

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Kennedy Holtsclaw, senior, UIndy, Human Resource Management, 3.992 GPA

The Florida Tech team jumps for joy after capturing the Division II Women’s Golf Championship by defeating Cal State San Marcos in the medal match play final. The school announced in February that the women’s golf program would be discontinued at the end of the spring, and the team claimed the ultimate prize on the very last day of the program’s existence.

MATT MARRIOTT/NCAA PHOTOS

MEN’S GOLF

QUARTERFINALS
Lincoln Memorial def. Barry, 3-2
Florida Southern def. Trevecca Nazarene, 3-1-1
Lynn def. Cal State Monterey Bay, 4-0-1
West Florida def. Arkansas Tech, 5-0

SEMIFINALS
Lynn def. West Florida, 4-1
Lincoln Memorial def. Florida Southern, 3-2

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
Lynn def. Lincoln Memorial, 3-2

INDIVIDUAL STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Michael VanDerLaan, Florida Southern, 72-69-66 – 207
4. Thomas Gana, Lynn, 74-69-69 – 212

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Brad Currier, Senior, Lindenwood, Exercise Science, 4.0 GPA

Florida Southern’s Michael VanDerLaan won the individual title during the stroke-play portion of the tournament, posting a 9-under par score of 207 over three rounds and winning by two strokes over Jorge Garcia of Sunshine State Conference rival Barry. VanDerLaan, whose older brother John won the individual title for Florida Southern last year, also won his matches in Florida Southern’s quarterfinal and semifinal match play pairings.

LEAH STAUFFER/NCAA PHOTOS
MEN’S TENNIS

QUARTERFINALS
Barry 4, West Florida 0
Columbus State 4, Midwestern State 1
Hawaii-Hilo 4, South Carolina Aiken 0
Hawaii Pacific 4, Southwest Baptist 2

SEMIFINALS
Columbus State 4, Hawaii Pacific 1
Barry 4, Hawaii-Hilo 0

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
Barry 4, Columbus State 3

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Luke Busse, Sophomore, Bluefield State, Mechanical Engineering, 4.0 GPA

Barry’s Pierre Montrieul returns a shot during his singles victory against KP Pannu of Columbus State during the Division II Men’s Tennis Championship. Down 3-0 after Columbus State won the doubles point and the first two singles matches, Montrieul’s win helped rally Barry to its fourth title. Interestingly, Pannu defeated Montrieul last year to clinch the crown for Columbus State.

MATT MARRIOTT/NCAA PHOTOS

WOMEN’S TENNIS

QUARTERFINALS
Barry 4, Azusa Pacific 0
Lynn 4, North Georgia 0
Columbus State 4, Hawaii Pacific 2
UIndy 4, Northwest Missouri State 0

SEMIFINALS
Barry 4, Columbus State 0
Lynn 4, UIndy 0

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
Barry 4, Lynn 2

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Greta Lazzarotto, Senior, Midwestern State, Business Administration, 4.0 GPA

Julie Razafindranaly set the tone for Barry in the singles portion of the championship, taking down Lynn’s Eliska Petrackova, 6-0, 6-3 for the first singles point and giving Barry a 2-0 lead overall. Barry went on to win its third consecutive title.

MATT MARRIOTT/NCAA PHOTOS
WOMEN’S OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Lincoln (Missouri), 64
2. Adams State, 54
3. Grand Valley State, 47.5
4. West Texas A&M, 47
5. San Francisco State, 42

EVENT CHAMPIONS

100-METER DASH
Rene Medley, Lincoln (Missouri), 11.20

200-METER DASH
Rene Medley, Lincoln (Missouri), 23.30

400-METER DASH
Kissi-Ann Brown, Lincoln (Missouri), 53.62

800-METER RUN
Skeil_ly Webb, Colorado-Springs, 2:06.96

1,500-METER RUN
Stephanie Cotter, Adams State, 4:36.91

5,000-METER RUN
Stephanie Cotter, Adams State, 14:10.58

10,000-METER RUN
Stephanie Cotter, Adams State, 30:12.30

200-METER DASH
Rene Medley, Lincoln (Missouri), 23.30

100-METER DASH
Rene Medley, Lincoln (Missouri), 23.30

400-METER RELAY
Lincoln (Missouri) (Shaian Vandenburg, Rene Medley, Renea Ambersley, Christine Moss), 45.33

3,000-METER STEEPLECHASE
Alicia Konieczek, Western Colorado, 10.23:89

400-METER HURDLES
CeCe Telfer, Franklin Pierce, 57.53

3,000-METER STEEPLECHASE
Alicia Konieczek, Western Colorado, 3:37.03

1,500-METER RELAY
Lincoln (Missouri) (Shaian Vandenburg, Rene Medley, Renea Ambersley, Christine Moss), 3:58.24

800-METER RUN
Renea Ambersley, Vandenburg, Rene Medley, Lincoln (Missouri) (Shaian Vandenburg), 3:58.24

LONG JUMP
Fatim Affessi, West Texas A&M, 6.28 (20-7 ¼)

TRIPLE JUMP
Annie Topal, New Mexico Highlands, 13.02 (42-8 ¾)

110-METER HURDLES
Myles Pringle, Ashland State, 14:10.58

SHOT PUT
Lindsay Baker, Ashland State, 51.39

400-METER HURDLES
Myles Pringle, Ashland State, 1:50.03

1,600-METER RELAY
Brett Meyer, Fort Hays State, 3:58.24

5,000-METER RUN
Zach Panning, Grand Valley State, 14:10.58

10,000-METER RUN
Zach Panning, Grand Valley State, 30:12.30

110-METER HURDLES
Trevor Bassitt, Ashland, 16.49 (54-1 ¼)

DISCUS THROW
Hammer Throw
Racheal Somoye, Texas A&M-Kingsville, 19.12 (62-8 ¾)

3,000-METER STEEPLECHASE
Leakey Kipkosgei, American International, 59.15 (194-01)

HAMMER THROW
Decio Andrade, Angelo State, 59.56 (195-04)

1,500-METER RELAY
Tiffin (Elijah Gauldin, Quincy Scott, Zion Cross, Jonte Baker), 3:56.4

TRIPLE JUMP
Ashland Eagles celebrate their school’s first team title at the Division II Men’s Outdoor Track and Field Championships. After finishing second in the team standings last year, the Eagles used individual victories from Myles Pringle (his second consecutive title in the 400-meter dash) and Trevor Bassitt (400-meter hurdles) to edge runner-up Angelo State by one point.

RUDY GONZALEZ/NCAA PHOTOS

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Megan Wenham, Senior, Colorado School of Mines, Mechanical Engineering, 4.0 GPA

Alicia Konieczek (No. 10) of Western Colorado leads the pack on her way to winning the 3,000-meter steeplechase for the second straight year. Lincoln (Missouri) won its second straight team title and ninth overall behind championship performances from Rene Medley in the 100- and 200-meter dashes, Kissi-Ann Brown in the 400-meter dash, and the 400-meter relay team of Shaian Vandenburg, Medley, Renea Ambersley and Christine Moss.

RUDY GONZALEZ/NCAA PHOTOS

MEN’S OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Ashland, 54
2. Angelo State, 53
3. Saint Augustine’s, 38
4. Grand Valley State, 35
5. Tiffin, 34.5

EVENT CHAMPIONS

100-METER DASH
Jonte Baker, Tiffin, 10.17

200-METER DASH
Mobolade Ajomale, Academy of Art, 20.80

400-METER DASH
Myles Pringle, Ashland, 45.61

800-METER RUN
Thomas Staines, Colorado State-Pueblo, 1:50.03

1,500-METER RUN
Brett Meyer, Fort Hays State, 3:58.24

5,000-METER RUN
Zach Panning, Grand Valley State, 14:10.58

10,000-METER RUN
Zach Panning, Grand Valley State, 30:12.30

110-METER HURDLES
Trevor Bassitt, Ashland, 16.49 (54-1 ¼)

DISCUS THROW
Joseph Brown, Texas A&M-Commerce, 59.54 (195-04)

HAMMER THROW
Decio Andrade, Angelo State, 67.67 (222-00)

JAVELIN THROW
Ricko Meckes, Queens (North Carolina), 71.28, (233-10)

DECATHLON
Alexandros Spyridonidis, Angelo State, 7,426

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Ben Schneidermann, Senior, Colorado Mesa, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, 3.968 GPA

The Ashland Eagles celebrate their school’s first team title at the Division II Men’s Outdoor Track and Field Championships. After finishing second in the team standings last year, the Eagles used individual victories from Myles Pringle (his second consecutive title in the 400-meter dash) and Trevor Bassitt (400-meter hurdles) to edge runner-up Angelo State by one point.

RUDY GONZALEZ/NCAA PHOTOS
MEN’S LACROSSE

QUARTERFINALS
Le Moyne 14, Mercy 4
Merrimack 14, Adelphi 12
Limestone 12, Tampa 11 (2 ot)
UIndy 14, Belmont Abbey 13 (ot)

SEMIFINALS
Merrimack 15, Le Moyne 14 (ot)
Limestone 16, UIndy 7

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Merrimack 16, Limestone 8

ELITE 90 HONOREE:
Charlie Bertrand, Junior, Merrimack, Mechanical Engineering, 3.917 GPA

Limestone’s Tyler Papa (left) scored twice in the Division II Men’s Lacrosse Championship game, but the Saints came up short against Merrimack, which won its second consecutive title.

LARRY FRENCH/NCAA PHOTOS

WOMEN’S LACROSSE

QUARTERFINALS
Queens (North Carolina) 14, Rollins 13
West Chester 16, East Stroudsburg 5
Adelphi 12, Le Moyne 11
Regis (Colorado) 16, Colorado Mesa 14

SEMIFINALS
Adelphi 17, Regis (Colorado) 10
West Chester 10, Queens (North Carolina) 9

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Adelphi 11, West Chester 5

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Allison Conn, junior, Queens (North Carolina), Finance, 4.0 GPA

Adelphi’s Kole Pollock (No. 8) reacts after scoring one of her four goals during the Panthers’ 11-5 win over West Chester in the Division II Women’s Lacrosse Championship game.

DOUG WITTE/NCAA PHOTOS

Molly Reinhart (left) of West Chester and Alyssa Gillespie of Adelphi battle for control of the ball. Adelphi won its ninth title in its 10th trip to the championship game.

DOUG WITTE/NCAA PHOTOS
## BASEBALL

**GAME 1**
Central Missouri 9, Ashland 4

**GAME 2**
Colorado Mesa 11, New York Institute of Technology 4

**GAME 3**
UC San Diego 5, Catawba 0

**GAME 4**
Tampa 4, Mercyhurst 2

**GAME 5**
Ashland 8, New York Institute of Technology 3

**GAME 6**
Colorado Mesa 6, Central Missouri 5

**GAME 7**
Mercyhurst 8, Catawba 5

**GAME 8**
Tampa 7, UC San Diego 2

**GAME 9**
Central Missouri 11, Ashland 3

**GAME 10**
Mercyhurst 6, UC San Diego 5

**GAME 11**
Central Missouri 7, Colorado Mesa 5

**GAME 12**
Tampa 12, Mercyhurst 0

**GAME 13**
Colorado Mesa 1, Central Missouri 0

**GAME 14**
Tampa 3, Colorado Mesa 1

**ELITE 90 HONOREE:**
Mason Janvrin, Junior, Central Missouri, Occupational Safety, 4.0 GPA

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## SOFTBALL

**CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES**
Texas A&M-Kingsville 7, Augustana (South Dakota) 2
Augustana (South Dakota) 6, Texas A&M-Kingsville 4
Augustana (South Dakota) 6, Texas A&M-Kingsville 4

**ELITE 90 HONOREE:**
Brooke Henning, Sophomore, Grand Valley State, Biomedical Science, 4.0 GPA

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Tampa closer Jacinto Arredondo was dominant during the tournament, winning twice and earning a save in the championship game.

GRANT HALVERSON/NCAA PHOTOS

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Texas A&M-Kingsville’s Saidi Castillo was the winning pitcher in Game 1 but took the loss in the decisive Game 3. The Javelinas finished the season at 52-10, the best campaign in program history, both in terms of wins total and win percentage as well as their best finish ever in the postseason.

JAMIE SCHWABEROW/NCAA PHOTOS
WOMEN’S CROSS COUNTRY

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Adams State, 23 (Team member finishes*: Stephanie Cotter, 1; Eilish Flanagan, 2; Roisin Flanagan, 3; HaLeigh Hunter-Galvan, 6; Tiffany Christensen, 11)
2. Grand Valley State, 87
3. Colorado School of Mines, 133
4. Western Colorado, 192
5. University of Mary, 233

*Based among runners with institutions vying for the team championship; does not include runners competing on an individual basis.

INDIVIDUAL STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Stephanie Cotter, Adams State, 19:15.5
2. Eilish Flanagan, Adams State, 19:39.0
4. Ida Narbuvoll, University of Mary, 20:12.1
5. Emmanuelah Chelimo, Alaska Anchorage, 20:18.3

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Yvonne Jeschke, Senior, Alaska Anchorage, Physical Education, 4.0 GPA

The Adams State trio of Stephanie Cotter (left), Eilish Flanagan (center), and Roisin Flanagan head to the finish line to give the Grizzlies the team title with a record-tying total of 23 points. Cotter won the individual title, with the twin Flanagan sisters Eilish and Roisin placing second and third, respectively.

RANDY ALLEN/NCAA PHOTOS
MEN’S CROSS COUNTRY

TEAM STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Colorado School of Mines, 57 (Team member place finishes: Kyle Moran, 4; Dylan Ko, 7; Luc Hagan, 13; Ben Schneiderman, 16; Jake Mitchem, 17)
2. Adams State, 136
3. Chico State, 143
4. Grand Valley State, 177
5. Northwest Missouri State, 206

*Based among runners with institutions vying for the team championship; does not include runners competing on an individual basis.

INDIVIDUAL STANDINGS (TOP 5)
1. Ezra Mutai, American International, 29:31.2
2. Kale Adams, Adams State, 29:43.9
3. Taylor Stack, Western Colorado, 29:47.6
4. Kyle Moran, Colorado School of Mines, 29:49.9
5. Gideon Kimutai, Missouri Southern State, 29:49.9

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Joseph Westrick, Senior, Gannon, Environmental Engineering, 4.0 GPA

Runners from Colorado School of Mines celebrate their second team title in five years at the Division II Men's Cross Country Championships. Freshman Kyle Moran, who finished fourth, and seventh-place finisher Dylan Ko led the Orediggers to the top of the team standings.

RANDY ALLEN/NCAA PHOTOS

American International's Ezra Mutai (center) is flanked by challengers Gideon Kimutai (left) of Missouri Southern State and Joshua Chepkesir of UNC Pembroke. Mutai pulled away near the end of the 10,000-meter race to win the individual title. Kimutai finished fifth while Chepkesir ended up eighth.

RANDY ALLEN/NCAA PHOTOS
Freddie Tracey of Charleston (West Virginia) reacts after scoring the first of his two goals during the Division II Men’s Soccer Championship final against Cal State L.A. Tracey and Cal State L.A. goalie Alex Brems went for a loose ball early in the 10th minute, and the ensuing collision sent Brems to the ground, leaving Tracey with an open path to the net. Tracey would convert again in the 74th minute to account for the 2-0 final score.

TIM NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS

MEN’S SOCCER

QUARTERFINALS
Charleston (West Virginia) 2, Franklin Pierce 0
UIndy 1, Maryville (Missouri) 0
Lynn 3, Wingate 0
Cal State L.A. 2, Cal State San Bernardino 0

SEMIFINALS
Cal State L.A. 3, UIndy 0
Charleston (West Virginia) 3, Lynn 1

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Charleston (West Virginia) 2, Cal State L.A. 0

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Adam Burchell, Sophomore, Charleston (West Virginia), Business Administration, 3.735 GPA

Williams N’Dah (right) of Charleston (West Virginia) elevates for a header over Jorge Orellana of Cal State L.A during a rainy day in Pittsburgh. The Golden Eagles won their second title in three years, defeating Cal State L.A., also nicknamed the Golden Eagles, 2-0.

TIM NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS
WOMEN’S SOCCER

QUARTERFINALS
Saint Rose 2, Bloomsburg 1
Flagler 4, Nova Southeastern 0
Grand Valley State 5, Minnesota State Mankato 2
Western Washington 3, Dixie State 0

SEMIFINALS
Western Washington 2, Flagler 0
Grand Valley State 3, Saint Rose 2

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
Grand Valley State 1, Western Washington 0 (2OT)

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Olivia Trombley,
Junior, Grand Valley State, Biomedical Sciences,
4.0 GPA

Grand Valley State’s Gianna Parlove (right) rejoices after scoring the game-winning goal during the Division II Women’s Soccer Championship. Grand Valley State, which had been heavily favored in last year’s title match before losing to first-time champion Bridgeport, reversed the outcome this year when Parlove converted only the Lakers’ second shot on goal in the 107th minute to defeat Western Washington.

TIM NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS

The Grand Valley State Lakers celebrate their sixth Division II Women’s Soccer Championship title since 2009 after defeating Western Washington, 1-0, in double overtime in the championship game. Western Washington’s top-ranked defense held Grand Valley State’s top-scoring offense in check for most of the day, as the Lakers struggled to get anything set up on goal and were held without a shot on goal through the first 90 minutes of regulation.

TIM NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS
CHAMPIONSHIPS

FOOTBALL

QUARTERFINALS
Slippery Rock, 65 Notre Dame (Ohio) 59
Ferris State 25, Northwest Missouri State 3
West Florida 43, Lenoir-Rhyne 38
Minnesota State Mankato 42, Texas A&M-Commerce 21

SEMIFINALS
Minnesota State Mankato 58, Slippery Rock 15
West Florida 28, Ferris State 14

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
West Florida 48, Minnesota State Mankato 40

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Ryan Schlichte, Senior, Minnesota State Mankato, Social Studies Teaching, 3.938 GPA

FIELD HOCKEY

FIRST ROUND
Kutztown 1, Southern New Hampshire 0 (OT)
East Stroudsburg 1, Assumption 0

SEMIFINALS
West Chester 2, Kutztown 0
Saint Anselm 1, East Stroudsburg 0

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH
West Chester 2, Saint Anselm 1

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Hannah Shirk, Kutztown, Senior, Early Childhood Special Education, 4.0 GPA

West Florida quarterback Austin Reed entered the championship contest having thrown for 1,122 yards and 10 touchdowns in the first four tournament games, and the redshirt freshman continued his hot hand in the final, torching Minnesota State Mankato for a championship-game record 523 yards and six touchdowns to propel the Argonauts to a 48-40 victory.

TIM NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS

West Chester’s Katie Thompson rejoices with the national championship trophy after the Golden Rams secured their third title with a 2-1 conquest of Saint Anselm. Thompson scored West Chester’s second goal, which turned out to be the game winner.

TIMOTHY NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS

Marre Corver (left) clears the ball for West Chester in the first half against Saint Anselm. Corver would later score the game’s first goal, deflecting a shot from Kari Foncoroni into the net. Saint Anselm entered the game having allowed only four goals all season and winning all 20 wins via shutout.

TIMOTHY NWACHUKWU/NCAA PHOTOS
WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL

ELITE EIGHT
Cal State San Bernardino def. Molloy, 25-16, 25-9, 25-18
Regis (Colorado) def. Saint Leo, 25-15, 25-18, 25-17

SEMIFINALS
Cal State San Bernardino def. Regis (Colorado), 21-25, 25-13, 25-17, 25-16

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

ELITE 90 HONOREE: Lydia Lukomski, Senior, Gannon, Biochemistry, 4.0 GPA

Cal State San Bernardino head coach Kim Cherniss pumps up her team prior to the Division II Women’s Volleyball Championship match against Nebraska-Kearney. The speech worked, as the top-ranked Coyotes went on to complete only the third unbeaten season in Division II women’s volleyball history with a 3-1 win over the Lopers.

Nebraska-Kearney’s Kamryn Schuler celebrates after the Lopers won the second set, but the next two would go to the Coyotes for the title.

Moira Murphy (#1) and Jalyn Hayes (#18) combined for 10 blocks/block assists to lead the Coyotes’ stellar defensive effort. The title is the first for the school in any sport.
Despite our division’s label as “II,” we have come to be known as a division of firsts. Many of our initiatives and programs have been so innovative and effective that they have been emulated by others in the NCAA structure. Not to brag, but a lot of our division’s success is a result of the commitment and passion from those who have been charged with providing its strategic direction – chancellors and presidents.

From our division’s emphasis on a balanced student-athlete experience, to devoting resources that provide exemplary championship opportunities, Division II chancellors and presidents have steadfastly held to our values and principles since our federated structure began back in 1997.

This current version of the Division II Presidents Council is no different. Our members are passionate about their service and dedicated to ensuring the best possible college experience for student-athletes at our institutions.

As proof of that commitment, the Presidents Council has even sponsored legislation at this year’s Convention to lengthen the term of service for council members from the current four years to six and specifying that the chair and vice chair may spend no more than three years in those roles.

Given the duties of the Presidents Council, which include of course establishing the strategic direction of the division, this increased longevity of service and institutional knowledge on the council will benefit the division overall.

It’s also another indication of how seriously Division II is committed to presidential leadership. Members of the Presidents Council see the bigger picture of what we’re trying to accomplish in Division II. In the same way they want to provide outstanding opportunities for all students on their campus, they look at their NCAA responsibilities from a student academic experience perspective rather than solely through an athletics lens – they are interested in what’s best for the student. That’s why the Division II Presidents Council is so effective.

A few things to note regarding our more recent accomplishments:

- Our commitment to the Division II philosophy over time has led to steady improvement in student-athlete graduation rates. The most recent single-year Academic Success Rate in fact is 75 percent, which is an all-time high for our division.
- The Presidents Council charged the Management Council Identity Subcommittee with reviewing options for how the $1.4 million allocated annually to the regular-season media agreement could be spent to effectively address membership stability and promote the Division II brand.
- The council also established a task force to examine enforcement and infraction trends, recent changes made in Division I and to determine what makes sense for the betterment of Division II in this space. We expect a final report and recommendations from the task force by our summer 2021 meeting.

It has been my honor and pleasure to chair this council, and I know that this group will not miss a beat moving forward with Sandra Jordan at the helm. Division II is indeed a division of firsts, which is an attribute the Presidents Council will certainly protect moving forward.

Gary Olson is president at Daemen College.
We are managers of total wellness

At last year’s NCAA Convention, the Management Council and the Presidents Council got together to talk about how Life in the Balance continues to resonate as a unique Division II way of life that benefits student-athletes and separates us from the pack when it comes to the experience we offer student-athletes.

What I liked most about the discussion was not just the reaffirmation of balance as the right way to do things, but also the balance of athletics, academics and community engagement as a recipe for total wellness for student-athletes.

Sure, we want student-athletes to excel in athletics and accomplish whatever goals they may have – however lofty they may be. But we also want to make sure we encourage student-athletes to enjoy a balanced college experience, from pursuing the academic curricula of their choice (and not having athletics interfere with that choice), to interacting fully with their campus and local communities and participating in internships and study-abroad programs that benefit their post-college careers.

And we want that entire experience to culminate in what the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is calling the “Total Package Student-Athlete.” The total package is one of total wellness – a memorable and rewarding experience, which of course is what college is supposed to be all about.

The Division II Management Council has always bought into fully to the concept of Life in the Balance, and it helps us to remember that balance equals wellness. We consider a lot of nuts-and-bolts policy and legislative items throughout the year, but in almost all cases we can attach a balance/wellness lens to each item we review, and that drives whether we support it.

Take participation in the Injury Surveillance Program, for example. The Management Council has emphasized the ISP over the last two years as a way to further protect student-athlete health and well-being by providing data that inform decisions about how we operate our athletics programs. Division II exceeded its goal of 30 percent participation this year, and the Management Council continues to push for more voluntary input from our membership.

We’re also supporting our Identity Subcommittee’s game day initiative that will roll out in the coming year and incorporate more of our values into the way we conduct athletics events.

It’s been personally satisfying to know that Life in the Balance has been sustained as a philosophical approach for more than a decade now, and there’s every reason to believe it will continue to thrive as a “DII thing” for the foreseeable future. The Division II Management Council will certainly be a player in that regard. You can count on it.

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Laura Liesman is the director of athletics at Georgian Court University.
The Division II Planning and Finance Committee oversees the division’s budget and strategic plan, and the committee made significant strides on both this year.

The PFC recommended a new long-range budget through 2032, which aligns the Division II revenue allocation with the Association’s 10-year financial plan and secures our future for the long term.

The long-range budget does not account for surpluses, as those may serve to fund unforeseen needs, special projects/initiatives or a possible supplemental distribution. Also, unallocated dollars from the previous fiscal year are added to the projected budget to calculate the total revenue for the division.

As for how the new budget accounts for allocations, following are some key assumptions:

- Total Championships Expenses: Assumes a two percent increase annually to cover transportation increases through FY32. Assumes an increase in per diem to $115 in FY22 (total cost: $780,000).
- Division II Championships Festivals: Assumes an increase of $50,000 in FY23. Assumes a different allocation in years with no festivals ($150,000 in FY22 and $200,000 in FY26 and FY30).
- Division II Enhancement Fund: Assumes a five percent increase annually through FY24.
- Division II Conference Grants: Assumes a $16,000 increase annually for membership growth through FY24, and an additional $230,000 in FY22 to increase the base amount each conference receives to $110,000.
- Division II Strategic Alliance Matching Grant (SAMG): Assumes a $175,000 increase in FY22, which can be used for the SAMG, the Coaching Enhancement Grant, and/or the Internship Grant, based on the specific program’s needs.

As for the strategic plan, our committee approved a timeline that corresponds with several benchmarks in the coming years, including the adoption of the NCAA strategic plan.

The current Division II Strategic Plan is for 2015-21, with a mid-term assessment having been completed in 2018. The Division II Census occurs every five years (2013 and 2018). The current media agreement with CBS/Turner is through 2024, with the new media agreement extending from 2025 to 2032.

Accordingly, here’s the timeline for our strategic planning process:

- January 2020 through August 2020 – Planning and Finance Committee reviews the current strategic plan to determine whether to recommend extending it through 2021-24.
- January 2021 to August 2021 – Facilitate strategic planning discussions for the new plan and gather feedback from committees and associations.
- Summer to Fall 2021 – From feedback and discussions, create questions for the 2022 Division II Census.
- January 2022 – Launch the new census with the membership.
- April 2022 – Management and Presidents Councils review census results.
- May 2022 to April 2023 – Share census results with other committees and associations and use census results to facilitate changes to the strategic plan.
- July/August 2023 – Management and Presidents Councils approve the plan.
- January 2024 – Launch the new strategic plan at the NCAA Convention.

The Planning and Finance Committee works diligently to align Division II resources to support initiatives in the strategic plan. We believe our work in 2019 accomplishes that goal not only in the short term but for years to come.
It will come as no surprise that the Legislation Committee’s primary task this year was to fully implement Division II University, particularly overseeing the successful roll-out of the first required coaches curriculum. The committee identified the six required modules, drafted the questions for the test at the end of each and assisted with the communication plan and general presentation. Already more than 12,600 individuals have completed the curriculum. In 2020, we’ll focus on making year two a similar success.

We are very proud of the impact DII U has already made and how our membership has embraced this new way of learning and sharing information. It will be one of those programs that will make people say, “Gee, I wish we had thought of it.” Truth be told, a lot of innovative people put their heads to this one, which is why the program is so effective. Its impact on the Association is already evident in that Divisions I and III have begun adopting this delivery method for their own needs. Sounds familiar, doesn’t it? There goes Division II leading the way again!

When our committee wasn’t in DII U mode, we spent time completing our review of the legislative recommendations from the Culture of Compliance Think Tank, which resulted in more than 40 noncontroversial legislative changes. That’s a challenge for you legislation folks out there – tell me another time when there were so many noncontroversial changes!

In 2020, the committee will review the impact of the financial aid changes the Division II membership adopted at the 2017 Convention that went into effect during the 2018-19 academic year. We’ll be analyzing whether the current equivalency limits remain appropriate, or if they should be decreased as a result of only athletics aid counting toward team equivalencies.

Sometimes people might perceive a legislation committee as a group that works only “in the weeds.” Not in Division II. Our focus is broader than policy in and of itself; rather, it is about how policy improves us as a division and benefits our student-athletes. And I think this group is pretty good at keeping that bigger picture at the forefront of our discussions.

Cherrie Wilmoth is the associate director of athletics for internal operations and compliance/senior woman administrator at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.
We make champions the DII way

Everybody loves a champion. And everybody wants to be one. Just look at the champions on pages 4-19 of this yearbook – the joy and pride of being a champion jumps right off the pages.

The Division II Championships Committee loves having a hand in creating our champions. We champion Division II student-athletes in how we fund our championships and in how we manage our processes from selections to celebrations.

Are there challenges along the way? Of course. Everyone loves a champion, but some folks have different ideas about how to produce them. In Division II, our regional model defines how our membership is represented at our final sites. Some people would prefer a more national bracket in which every team is seeded, but that’s not only cost-prohibitive – it’s not who we are.

In recent years we’ve taken steps to encourage sport committees to seed the regional champions to ensure we have the very best matchups in the finals. That retains our commitment to regional representation and enhances the championship experience at the same time.

This year, the Championships Committee continued refining the championship experience. The Division II National Championships Festival Working Group created a number of enhancements that will go into effect right away (see page 34). I’m personally excited to see us commit to a joint men’s and women’s basketball championship in the festival “off years.” That ensures something different every year for the near future (see the accompanying schedule).

We also came up with ideas to loosen the “neutrality” policy in championships to enhance the competitive atmosphere. Preliminary-round hosts in all team sports are now able to give their season ticket holders first right of refusal for on-campus NCAA postseason competition. We also recommended a one-year pilot for the preliminary rounds of the Division II Football Championship, the Division II Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships and the Division II Softball Championship to allow hosts of these rounds to conduct the same kinds of pregame promotions and celebrations they run during their regular-season home games.

It’s another example of Division II innovation, isn’t it? The Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee supported both recommendations. Student-athletes want to play in as exciting an atmosphere as possible while understanding that it should be a fair stage.

Yes, everyone loves a champion. And the Division II Championships Committee is proud to play a leading role in creating them.

Sue Willey is the vice president for intercollegiate athletics at the University of Indianapolis.

Division II National Championships Festival Schedule Through 2032*

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>2027</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Dec. 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2028</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>May 22-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2029</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Mar. 5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Mar. 25-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Dec. 4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2032</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>May 17-22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates are subject to change; check http://www.ncaa.org/championships?division=d2 for updates.

DATE FORMULAS:

- **Fall Festival** – First Saturday in December (Tuesday-Saturday).
- **Winter Festival** – Second Friday-Saturday in March (Tuesday-Saturday).
- **Spring Festival** – Fourth Saturday in May (Monday-Saturday).
- **Basketball Festival** – Fourth Weekend in March (Tuesday-Saturday). [Note: The Men’s and Women’s Elite Eights will always occur the week before the NCAA Division I Men’s and Women’s Final Fours, even if the date formula conflicts due to the number of weekends in March. When there are five Saturdays in March, the championship game is one week later.]
When I was appointed to chair this important committee, I was immediately excited about continuing the work of this group, which ensures that institutions wanting to join Division II are doing so for the right reasons and are able to successfully matriculate through this process to become active and productive members and colleagues.

As a committee, we are constantly working on ways to manage the membership process, and I’m pleased to say we have developed new methods to streamline it for future applicants this year. We retained a vendor to review all the information asked for in the membership application and in the annual reports and have made substantive changes based on recommendations. This new application process rolled out this fall.

Also this fall we welcomed four new active members: Auburn University at Montgomery, Biola University, Davenport University and Purdue University Northwest. We now have 310 active member institutions now in Division II, which is up from 308 last year.

Four other schools are currently in the membership process:
- **Provisional Year Two Schools:** Savannah State University and University of Texas at Tyler.
- **Provisional Year One Schools:** College of Staten Island and Frostburg State University.

As our role also encompasses oversight of active member engagement in ongoing education, we are excited to have one Regional Compliance Seminar and two Regional Rules Seminar sites for this coming spring and summer (see the accompanying schedule). These seminars continue to resonate as valuable learning and networking opportunities for the entire Division II membership.

Our committee is focused on the betterment of our division, and we work diligently to develop standards and benchmarks to make prospective members – and current members – accountable for upholding the Division II attributes and characteristics we believe make our division the best in the NCAA.

Jackson Stava is the director of athletics at Seattle Pacific University.

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**2020 Regional Compliance Seminars and Regional Rules Seminars Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Conference(s)</th>
<th>Seminar Locations</th>
<th>Seminar Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 23-24, 2020</td>
<td>Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference &lt;br&gt; East Coast Conference &lt;br&gt; Northeast-10 Conference</td>
<td>Trumbull, Connecticut</td>
<td>Regional Compliance Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18-20, 2020</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
<td>Regional Rules Seminar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1-3, 2020</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Regional Rules Seminar</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each Regional Compliance Seminar site will host 85-100 participants; Regional Rules Seminar sites will host 200-300 participants.
It’s academic: Success is our goal

I know the name of our committee is the “Academic Requirements Committee,” but I often feel it should be the “Academic Encouragement Committee.” Yes, we are the group responsible for reviewing the division’s academic standards and recommending policy and legislation regarding initial-eligibility, progress-toward-degree and transfer requirements, but ultimately we are interested in student-athlete academic success, period. In essence, we are their cheerleaders in the classroom.

To ensure student-athletes’ academic success, we do a lot of work behind the curtain. For example, this past year we:

* Approved a waiver checklist to provide self-applied relief on campus in specific scenarios for member institutions that have student-athletes who present an academic deficiency. The checklist rolled out in August of 2019 and was intended to increase efficiencies on campus without compromising academic standards. Our committee will review this checklist over the coming year and identify areas for potential expansion.

* Recommended to the Division II Planning and Finance Committee that $150,000 be allocated annually to the Strategic Alliance Matching Grant Program to help support the expansion of academic advising positions on Division II campuses. The initiative was so successful that the funding was approved in the summer and used in full by the fall. Clearly our Division II members welcomed the initiative and will realize the benefits quickly. Continuing education opportunities also will be increased through expanded Division II University modules and updated online resources.

As for the coming year, our committee will play an important role in the division’s review of factors affecting Federal Graduation Rates and NCAA Academic Success Rates of African-American male student-athletes, which have remained relatively constant over the past decade while rates for other student-athletes of color, including African-American females, have risen. We will review data and discuss potential recommendations for improvement.

The ARC also will review the current restrictions on providing athletics aid to nonqualifiers. Over the last six years, only 3 percent of initial eligibility waivers filed by the Division II membership have been outright denied; meaning 97 percent of waivers granted, at a minimum, access to athletics aid. Our committee plans to discuss whether this legislative restriction remains appropriate, or if institutions should be provided the discretion to determine at the local level which first-year student-athletes should be given athletics aid.

The ARC is about making sure we do whatever we can to facilitate student-athlete academic success. We fully understand the importance of balance in the Division II student-athlete experience, and our committee members work diligently to develop processes and standards that allow – and encourage – student-athletes to achieve their goals in the classroom.

Christina Whetsel is the assistant athletics director for compliance at Augusta University.

**AVERAGE DIVISION II FEDERAL RATES VS. ASRs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student Body</th>
<th>Student-Athletes</th>
<th>Federal Rate</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>ASR</th>
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<tr>
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<td>58% +2</td>
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<tr>
<td>DII Men</td>
<td>46% +1</td>
<td>50% +1</td>
<td>65% +1</td>
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<tr>
<td>DII Women</td>
<td>54% +1</td>
<td>67% +1</td>
<td>86%</td>
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</table>

Note: Numbers in red are percentage changes from 2016-19

**AVERAGE DIVISION II FEDERAL RATES VS. ASRs**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student Body</th>
<th>Student-Athletes</th>
<th>Federal Rate</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>ASR</th>
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<td>61% +4</td>
<td>75% +1</td>
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<tr>
<td>DII Women</td>
<td>55% +2</td>
<td>69% +2</td>
<td>87%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers in red are percentage changes from 2018
Alex Shillow | Chair

DII SAAC leads with Total Package Student-Athlete initiative

It has been a tremendous year for Division II student-athletes. Now more than ever, we are taking monumental strides on the importance of student-athlete well-being in various ways. As the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, we are proud of how the work we do has such a positive impact on student-athletes all around the country.

This year, we established our goals as a committee with the theme being the “Total Package Student-Athlete,” in which we are focusing on mental health, diversity and inclusion, professional development and Love2Play.

With mental health, we continue to talk about how to break the ongoing stigma. Diversity and inclusion are focused on creating an inclusive environment that showcases the diverse student-athlete population in Division II. Professional development means preparing student-athletes for life after college, and the Love2Play initiative focuses on encouraging younger athletes to play multiple sports rather than specialize at a young age and to have fun along the way.

In addition to our focus on the student-athlete voice and well-being, we are still committed to community engagement and our partnerships with the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Team IMPACT. We recognize there is amazing work being done with many other organizations, and we encourage all student-athletes to make an impact in their communities where they see fit. We continue to meet with Make-A-Wish and Team IMPACT to see how we can better our partnership and continue to impact many lives around the nation.

We’re proud of Division II raising $398,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation in the 2018-19 academic year. We were also proud for the NCAA national office to host its first wish reveal during our July SAAC and Management Council Summit. The historic event was great for our committee and the Management Council to experience the joy of what hosting a reveal brings to a child and their family. With Team IMPACT, we are continuing to see the waitlist grow for teams to connect with children.

As chair of national SAAC, this position comes with great humility and honor. My goal is to represent all student-athletes with integrity and uphold their voice on the national level. I am very proud of our work as a committee, and I know we will continue the monumental strides we have made into next year. The student-athlete voice is so powerful. As we look ahead to 2020, I am encouraged to know that we are putting student-athlete well-being at the forefront in all areas of college athletics to give every person a true opportunity to “make it theirs.”

Alex Shillow is a football student-athlete at Texas A&M University-Commerce.
It’s unanimous: In Division II, life in balance means life in wellness

In June of 2005 about 150 presidents and chancellors from Division II colleges and universities convened in Orlando to discuss the future of the division. They weren’t there to have fun, but to address a growing concern.

At the time, a number of Division II schools were either in the process of or beginning to consider reclassifying their athletics programs to Division I, and Division II wasn’t attracting many new members to replace them. It had all the makings of an identity crisis.

That presidential summit in 2005 – the first of its kind in any NCAA division – led to the Division II membership identifying the characteristics and attributes that distinguish the division from the other two. What emerged were Learning, Service,

Passion, Sportsmanship, Resourcefulness, and, of course, Balance.

Of these six, Balance became the cornerstone of Division II’s strategic positioning platform. The NCAA had often emphasized balancing the student and
the athlete, but the word balance for Division II meant the holistic development of young people to ensure that the college experience prepares them for a productive and rewarding life beyond graduation. That means allowing students to achieve their highest athletics goals while still focusing on all that makes for being a productive citizen beyond the playing fields and courts.

Over time Division II members have come to accept – and celebrate – living the balance they say they’re about. Life in the Balance isn’t just strategy-speak – it makes good business sense for Division II institutions and it certainly makes good practical sense for the students who benefit from a balanced approach. The idea of balance resonates with everyone as an appropriate way to incorporate participation in our great athletics programs as a beneficial component in the overall educational experience.

At the 2019 NCAA Convention – ironically in Orlando, the very place in which Life in the Balance germinated – the Division II Presidents and Management Councils met jointly to discuss what Life in the Balance means to them, their institutions, and to the division overall. The overwhelming sense was that balance remains an effective and practical – even noble – way to distinguish Division II institutions within the menu of college choices for prospective student-athletes, and to provide already enrolled student-athletes an enriched college experience that contributes to their total wellness.
Festival enhancements on the way

Recommendations to enhance the Division II National Championships Festival platform made their way through the governance structure this year and will become operational for the next festival bid cycle (fall 2022, spring 2024 and winter 2025).

The enhancements emerged from a representative working group the Division II Management Council and Presidents Council appointed to review all aspects of the festivals (e.g., timing, date formulas, formats, sports included, efficiencies/logistics, ancillary events and activities, quality of student-athlete experience) and submit ways to improve the product.

Following are some of the more significant measures that were approved.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEM:

- Allow men’s and women’s soccer to start a week earlier in festival years (2020 Convention Proposal No. 2020-13).

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that no season is shortened due to participation in the festival. Legislative action is required only if the start dates for practice or competition change in any sport.
- Move the spring festival back one week to align with the softball standard date formula (fourth Saturday in May—Memorial Day weekend). Legislative action is required only if the start date for spring practice or competition changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NCAA STAFF, SPORT COMMITTEE AND CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE IMPLEMENTATION:

- Make the opening ceremonies at all festivals mandatory.
- Move the opening ceremony for the winter festival to Thursday so that it aligns with the start of wrestling and indoor track and field and adjust the swimming and diving competition schedule to accommodate this. (The Division II Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Committee will be asked to produce a schedule and logistics.)
- Eliminate the closing ceremony for the winter festival.
- For fall and spring closing ceremonies, ensure adequate time between the conclusion of the championships and the start of the closing ceremony to allow time for on-field celebrations and travel, or consider eliminating the closing ceremonies based on site- or season-specific circumstances.
- Conduct the men’s and women’s cross country championships on a different day during the fall festival rather than Saturday (e.g., Friday).
- Conduct a separate men’s and women’s basketball festival event in the “off” year of other festivals. (The Division II Men’s and Women’s Basketball Committees will be asked to produce a schedule and other necessary logistics.)
- Allow hotels to be farther from competition venues to ensure championship-caliber facilities.
- Allow exceptions for geographic proximity regarding hotels. If the best venue is farther out for a sport (likely golf, cross country and perhaps tennis), allow those teams to stay closer to the venue and work to replicate the festival atmosphere as much as possible at that location.
- Develop a comprehensive festival app to include schedule of events, notifications, registration for ancillary events and to distribute the student-athlete survey.
- Develop an “At a Glance” guide for bidding and hosting a festival (one for each season) to be used in conjunction with the full bid specification documents.
- Sell an all-access pass for breakfast, opening/closing, etc., for extra team members not included in the official travel party.
- Provide team pictures (e.g., create a photo opportunity for all the national champions at the closing ceremony).
- Stream all games/events in the hotel lounges.
Letters are worth 1,000 words

After winning the Division II Women’s Volleyball Championship at the 2018 Festival in Pittsburgh, student-athletes from the University of Tampa sent reminders of why the Division II Festivals matter so much. Staff at the NCAA received 16 handwritten thank you notes that reflect positively on nearly every aspect of the Festivals, with a different set of experiences highlighting the Festival for each student-athlete.

“Sometimes we get caught up in the mountain of logistics required in staging an event like the Festival,” said the NCAA’s John Baldwin, who oversees the Festivals, “but these letters serve as reminders to all of us – staff and membership – of why we do what we do. We will cherish these letters for years to come.”
PSAC, North Georgia top Make-A-Wish donor chart

Division II schools raised $398,000 for Make-A-Wish during the 2018-19 academic year, boosting the total raised since the partnership was established in 2003 to more than $6.2 million. In addition, more than 740 wishes have been granted in that time.

Schools in all Division II conferences participated in fundraising, including every school in both the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference and the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference.

For the fifth consecutive year, the PSAC was the top fundraising conference, bringing in $54,904. For the fourth consecutive year, the University of North Georgia was the top fundraising school, raising $23,929.

“Across Division II, we continue to see our schools fired up to support Make-A-Wish and celebrate the amazing life-changing impacts each year,” said Alex Shillow, a football student-athlete at Texas A&M University-Commerce and chair of the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

SAAC continued to use an allocation model adopted four years ago that earmarks money collected from Division II championships and enforcement fines as a supplement to institutional fundraising to help schools host a wish reveal celebration on campus. Last year, five schools raised more than $10,000 — the national average cost of granting a wish — and automatically earned a wish reveal celebration. An additional nine schools received money from the allocation model to help them meet the minimum fundraising requirement for hosting a wish reveal.

TOP 5 SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>University of North Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Valley State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Chester University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Gannon University</td>
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<td>Davenport University</td>
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TOP FIVE CONFERENCES

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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference</td>
<td>$54,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peach Belt Conference</td>
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<td>Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference</td>
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<td>$31,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Atlantic Conference</td>
<td>$21,751</td>
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HONORS AND AWARDS
HONORS AND AWARDS

NCAA Woman of the Year

Established in 1991 and now in its 29th year, the NCAA Woman of the Year award honors graduating female college athletes who have exhausted their eligibility and distinguished themselves in academics, athletics, service and leadership throughout their collegiate careers.

A total of 131 nominees this year came from Division II colleges and universities, part of a record 585 nominations from all NCAA schools. From that pool, conferences selected their own recipients (33 in all from Division II; conferences are permitted to recognize two nominees if at least one is a woman of color or an international student-athlete). The NCAA Woman of the Year Selection Committee chose 30 honorees (10 from each division), from which three in each division were named as finalists.

The overall winner of the award was Angela Mercurio of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

DIVISION II FINALISTS

Chelsea Abreu led the Panthers to two national championships (2017 and 2019), one runner-up finish (2016) and two conference championships (2016 and 2017) during her career. She spent two years as team captain while serving throughout college as a member of the university’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

Abreu volunteered extensively with Lace Up 4 Pediatric Cancer, including fundraising to help hospitals grant wishes while funding innovative research to fight pediatric cancer. As team captain, she took a leadership role in her team’s adoption of Lexi, a 5-year-old with a rare mitochondrial disease.

A business management major, Abreu was named Adelphi’s Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year in 2019. She also was named a Willamette School of Business Leadership Scholar and was inducted into the Beta Gamma Sigma international business honor society.

“Being a student-athlete has given me a platform to provide a positive example to young women,” Abreu said. “I firmly believe that my purpose in life is centered on helping others achieve their personal best, and I will continue to uphold these traits as a leader in my community.”

Krissey Ortiz led the Fighting Knights to a regional title and a ninth-place finish at the 2019 Division II Women’s Golf Championships. She ranks among the best golfers in school history with the fourth-lowest career stroke average, and she is tied for sixth in career tournament finishes among the best golfers in school history with the fourth-lowest place finish at the 2019 Division II Women’s Golf Championships. She spent three years on Lynn’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and on Division II’s national SAAC. As a member of the national SAAC, she spent one year on the NCAA Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct and the Division II Management Council.

Ortiz spent four years volunteering at a local retirement home and participated in several local initiatives, including beach cleanups and programs that feed the homeless and the underserved in her community and abroad. In conjunction with Make-A-Wish, she planned and executed wish reveals for two children.

A four-time Women’s Golf Coaches Association Scholar All-American, Ortiz made the Sunshine State Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll every year. She also earned third-team Google Cloud Academic All-America At-Large honors in 2019.

“Spirit, service and strength: three simple words that have a deeper meaning to me,” Ortiz said. “The values of Lynn University have played a major role in my life and have helped shape the person I am today. During my time as a student-athlete, I came to realize that I would have to learn and develop spirit and service first before I could develop strength as a leader and athlete.”

Hailey Tucker led the Bulldogs to two regular-season conference championships (2018, 2019), a conference tournament victory in 2019 and a national runner-up finish in 2019. She was a Women’s Basketball Coaches Association All-American in 2019, the Great American Conference Female Athlete of the Year (2019), a two-time conference Player of the Year in basketball (2017, 2018) and the Division II Conference Commissioner’s Association Central Region Player of the Year in 2018.

The summa cum laude graduate is the school’s all-time leader in blocked shots, steals and three-pointers.

Tucker spent one year as vice president of her campus Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and dedicated significant time to community service at youth organizations and schools throughout her career. A two-time second-team Google Cloud Academic All-American (2018, 2019), Tucker was a 2019 recipient of Southwestern Oklahoma State’s Who’s Who award, which is presented to the school’s highest academic achievers. She also earned two Great American Conference Distinguished Scholar honors (2018, 2019) and spearheaded the creation of a sports broadcasting program at Southwestern Oklahoma State.

“I grew not only as an athlete at Southwestern Oklahoma State but also as a woman,” Tucker said. “I give all thanks to my professors, coaches and community for believing in me and pushing me to be the best woman I can be.”
Division II Conference Honorees

CALIFORNIA COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Gabby Evaristo, California State University, San Bernardino, soccer
*Summer Youis Bales, University of California, San Diego, soccer

CENTRAL ATLANTIC COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE
Cliona Crammond, Goldey-Beacom College, soccer

CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Teeya McLean, Fayetteville State University, bowling and volleyball
*Christine-Evette Ngeve, Shaw University, softball, volleyball and outdoor track and field

CONFERENCE CAROLINAS
Hannah Glover, University of Mount Olive, indoor and outdoor track and field

EAST COAST CONFERENCE
Jenna Turato, Molloy College, softball

GREAT AMERICAN CONFERENCE
Mariah Ewy, East Central University, softball
*Hailey Tucker, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, basketball

GREAT LAKES INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
Kylie Asmus, Ashland University, softball

GREAT LAKES VALLEY CONFERENCE
Jessica Kelliher, Lewis University, basketball

GREAT MIDWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
Carsyn Koch Johnson, Cedarville University, cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field

GREAT NORTHWEST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
Danielle McCormick, University of Alaska Anchorage, cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field

GULF SOUTH CONFERENCE
Nicole Fedorovitch, University of Alabama in Huntsville, lacrosse

HEARTLAND CONFERENCE
*Katelyn Gamble, Rogers State University, softball
Madison Hagood, Oklahoma Christian University, softball

LONE STAR CONFERENCE
Jaslyn Wacker, Texas A&M University-Commerce, volleyball

MID-AMERICA INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION
Brianna Schmitz, Emporia State University, indoor and outdoor track and field

MOUNTAIN EAST CONFERENCE
*Norah Barnes, Notre Dame College (Ohio), soccer
Kristine Gegeshidze, University of Charleston (West Virginia), tennis

NORTHEAST-10 CONFERENCE
*Chelsea Abreu, Adelphi University, lacrosse

NORTHERN SUN INTERCOLLEGIATE CONFERENCE
Makenzie Morgen, University of Minnesota Duluth, volleyball

PACIFIC WEST CONFERENCE
*Sarah Herron, Concordia University Irvine, indoor and outdoor track and field

PEACH BELT CONFERENCE
Renee VanHorn, University of North Georgia, soccer

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
*Kaitlin Hatch, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, field hockey
Christina Sather, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, swimming and diving

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
Alicja Konieczek, Western Colorado University, cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field
Skylyn Webb, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, indoor and outdoor track and field

SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE CONFERENCE
Ashley Johnson, Albany State University (Georgia), basketball

SUNSHINE STATE CONFERENCE
Nicole Mattson, Florida Southern College, volleyball
*Kristina Ortiz, Lynn University, golf

*Denotes top 30 finalist
Midwestern State earns 2019 Award of Excellence

Midwestern State University earned the 2019 Division II Award of Excellence for an initiative in which more than 150 student-athletes took part in a spree of kindness, spending more than 400 hours volunteering in their community and impacting a countless number of people, all to honor the memory of former Midwestern State football student-athlete Robert Grays, the person whose kindness and positive demeanor inspired them to action.

Grays died Sept. 19, 2017, from a neck injury suffered in a football game. Since then, MSU Texas student-athletes have rallied to honor his legacy, turning his number, 24, into a symbol of strength and unity displayed in competition on football helmets, jerseys and arms. In September 2018, for the one-year anniversary of Grays’ death, they took their efforts even further with the establishment of 24 Strong Week.

Throughout 24 Strong Week, members of MSU Texas teams performed random acts of kindness and volunteered their time around the Wichita Falls, Texas, community. The football team engaged with elementary school students. The softball team collected donations for a food pantry. The women’s volleyball team wrote thank you letters and made goodie bags for each athletic trainer at MSU Texas. Several teams worked with young athletes in their sport. And all made a difference.

The school received $1,500 for the award to use toward future community engagement efforts. It also earned the opportunity to have a football game or basketball doubleheader featured in the 2019-20 regular-season media agreement.

The Great Lakes Valley Conference received the runner-up prize of $1,250 for its Someone to Listen mental health awareness campaign. Student-athletes from around the conference created public service announcements about the importance of seeking help and supporting others by listening.

The third-place prize of $1,000 went to Goldey-Beacom College for its Veterans of the Summit: Stories of Service project, through which student-athletes visited veterans at The Summit retirement community to transcribe some of their stories.

This is the sixth year Division II has issued the Award of Excellence to recognize schools for their community and campus engagement initiatives. Schools are selected by the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee based on events over the past year that exemplify the Division II philosophy, identity, community engagement and student-athlete leadership initiatives.

Strategic Alliance Matching Grants

Entering its 20th cycle, the Division II Strategic Alliance Matching Grant is a program through which the NCAA funds recipients at 75 percent of the proposed salary and benefits for the first year, 50 percent for the second year and 25 percent for the third year to help create full-time senior-level administrative positions or enhance current positions. The NCAA also provides recipients with $12,500 of professional development and technology funding during the first three years. The following institutions and conferences were selected to receive the grants for 2019-20:

- Christian Brothers University, Associate Director of Athletics/Director of External Relations
- California State University, San Bernardino, Assistant Director of Athletics for Student-Athlete Success
- Colorado State University-Pueblo, Assistant Director of Athletics for Facilities and Events
- Lake Superior State University, Assistant Director of Athletics for Marketing
- Michigan Technological University, Director of Student-Athlete Wellness and Clinical Counselor
- Roberts Wesleyan College, Assistant Director of Athletics
- Southern Wesleyan University, Assistant Director of Athletics for Academic Success and Community Engagement
- Tusculum University, Assistant Director of Athletics for Compliance and Student-Athlete Development
- University of Mount Olive, Director of Student-Athlete Development
- University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Athletics Academic Advisor

Ethnic Minorities and Women’s Internship Grants

These are one-year grants that provide funding for full-time, entry-level administrative positions. The NCAA provides $22,500 to support the salary of the hired intern and $3,000 in professional development funding. The following institutions and conferences were selected to receive the grants for 2019-20:

- Concordia University, Portland, Coordinator of Athletics Operations
- Emmanuel College (Georgia), Assistant Athletics Director Intern
- Gannon University of Pennsylvania, Assistant Compliance and Academics Support Coordinator
- Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association, Sports Administration Intern
- Palm Beach Atlantic University, Coordinator for Student-Athlete Success
- Upper Iowa University, Student-Athlete Success Intern
Faculty Mentor Award recipient named

The Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee has selected Dr. Bennett Cherry of California State University, San Marcos, as the recipient of the seventh annual Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award.

The Division II SAAC noted that Cherry’s attributes and service coincide with the SAAC’s primary focus in the coming year – the Total Student-Athlete Package – which emphasizes mental wellness, diversity and inclusion, professional development, and the enjoyment of sport.

"Dr. Cherry helps encourage this concept with all of his student-athletes," said Tayler Stover, internal operations coordinator of the Division II SAAC and former soccer student-athlete at Rogers State University. "Through his focus on education and preparing for the future, to setting up programs that better accclimate student-athletes into college, Dr. Cherry embodies the spirit of this award."

Cherry is in his 19th year as a professor of entrepreneurship and management at Cal State San Marcos. His specialties include creativity in business, entrepreneurship and new venture creation, human resources strategy, workplace climate assessment, and service delivery strategy.

Dr. Bennett Cherry

Cherry has been involved with the Cal State San Marcos athletics department since his first year at the institution in 2000. He was appointed as the faculty athletics representative in 2004 and continues to serve in that role. His impact is felt beyond the institution with his service on the California Collegiate Athletic Association Executive Council and as a member of the steering committee for the 2019 NCAA Division II FAR Fellows Institute.

Cherry emcees the Cal State San Marcos scholar-athlete luncheon each spring and meets annually with the school’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. He also participates in the annual “Cougar Kick-Off,” during which he discusses academic achievement, inclusiveness, being an ambassador for the university and promoting campus pride to incoming student-athletes.

“In the recruiting process, I always ask the prospective student-athletes, ‘Why are you here?’ which usually prompts them to say, ‘To get a degree.’ “Cherry said. “But of course their college career embodies much more than simply earning a diploma.

“College is a new frontier, and you can create it to be whatever you want, which is why the Division II ‘Make It Yours’ mantra is so on point. You are able to make choices that benefit you long-term, and you start viewing yourself more as a person who can contribute to both a team and to society as a whole. Watching student-athletes progress from incoming students to graduation makes me proud.”

Cherry said he attends as many athletics events as possible, including practices, to show his support and learn more about how the student-athletes interact with each other. “I love seeing them in their gear. It reminds me of the hard work they put in and how they devote hours toward their sport and their academic pursuits. It's so impressive,” Cherry said.

He said being the faculty athletics representative is among the best components of his service at Cal State San Marcos. “I hope the joy I have interacting with the student-athletes and the efforts I take to do my best are apparent to anyone who watches me work,” he said.

The Division II SAAC members noted that joy has carried over into Cougar student-athletes succeeding in all aspects of their college career, which makes Cherry an ideal recipient of the Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award.

Coaching Enhancement Grants

These grants help member schools create full-time assistant coaching positions in any of the 24 NCAA-sponsored sports. The NCAA provides $25,000 in funding in the first year, $15,000 in the second year and $8,000 in the third year. The school is required to supplement the funding, as well as commit to funding the position in full for the fourth and fifth years. Additionally, the NCAA provides $1,200 during each of the first three years of the grant toward professional development opportunities for the hired coach. The following institutions and conferences were selected to receive the grants for 2019-20:

Colorado State University-Pueblo, Assistant Women’s Soccer Coach
Coker College, Assistant Softball Coach/Assistant SAAC Advisor
Davis & Elkins College, Assistant Men’s and Women’s Track and Field Coach
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, Assistant Women’s Lacrosse Coach
Fayetteville State University, Assistant Women’s Track and Field Coach
Limestone College, Sports Nutritionist/Assistant Strength Coach
Northern State University, Assistant Women’s Soccer Coach

SHUTTERSTOCK
HONORS AND AWARDS

Presidents’ Award honors 32 schools

Thirty-two Division II member schools have been named recipients of the Presidents’ Award for Academic Excellence, presented to member schools earning an Academic Success Rate of 90 percent or higher. This marks the ninth year of the program.

Bentley University was again the top performer in the division, turning in a four-year ASR of 99 percent, followed by Thomas Jefferson University with 98 percent and Saint Michael’s College with 97 percent.

The Northeast-10 Conference and the Great Lakes Valley Conference led Division II’s 24 conferences in ASR rates, each with five athletics programs posting scores of 90 percent or more.

Division II Presidents Council Chair Gary Olson said the high number of institutions achieving such academic distinction lends credence to the division’s life in the balance philosophy that encourages student-athletes to pursue excellence in the classroom as well as in all other facets of the college experience.

“Division II is dedicated to supporting the academic success of student-athletes,” said Olson, president of Daemen College. “What is even more remarkable, 11 of these schools have been recognized each year of this program. We commend the institutions for their commitment to academic excellence and dedication to preparing student-athletes for life after college.”

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<th>School</th>
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<td>Florida Southern College</td>
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Postgraduate Scholarship Recipients

The NCAA awards $7,500 postgraduate scholarships annually to student-athletes who excel academically and athletically and who are at least in their final year of intercollegiate athletics competition. Each sports season, there are 29 scholarships available for men and 29 scholarships available for women for use in an accredited graduate program. The following includes Division II awardees for winter and spring sports in 2019, and for fall sports in 2018, since awardees for fall sports in 2019 had yet to be announced by press time.

MEN’S FALL SPORTS 2018
Sam Blankenship, Harding University, football
Kirby Hora, Augustana University (South Dakota), football
Aaron Rochow, Northern Michigan University, football
Jonah Theisen, Black Hills State University, cross country

WOMEN’S FALL SPORTS 2018
Summer Bales, University of California, San Diego, soccer
Julia DeVere, Seattle Pacific University, soccer
Anna Holmquist, Wingate University, volleyball
Haley Limper, University of Southern Indiana, volleyball

MEN’S WINTER SPORTS 2019
Tate Barnhardt, University of Mary, wrestling
Joshua Barrows, Augustana University (South Dakota), indoor track and field
Thomas Bye, Michigan Technological University, skiing
Brett Velasquez, St. Cloud State University, wrestling

WOMEN’S WINTER SPORTS 2019
Erin Alderman, Texas Woman’s University, gymnastics
Gina Patterson, Grand Valley State University, indoor track and field
Miranda Ristau, Northern State University, basketball
Rachael Tolsma, Hillsdale College, indoor track and field

MEN’S SPRING SPORTS 2019
Martin Moser, University of Mount Olive, tennis
Nicholas Urban, Grand Valley State University, tennis

WOMEN’S SPRING SPORTS 2019
Peyton Mills, Harding University, softball
Haylea Salamon, Lenoir-Rhyne University, outdoor track and field
Degree-Completion Award Recipients

The NCAA Division II Degree-Completion Award Committee selected the following 86 recipients, awarding $521,846 in grants for the 2019-20 academic year.

Jose Antelo, St. Mary’s University (Texas)
Rhett Baerlocher, Saint Martin’s University
Bergen Benedict, California State University, San Marcos
Scout Black, Mars Hill University
Michael Borst, Minot State University
Wilson Briggs, Dominican University of California
Morgan Brodie, Pittsburg State University
Staci Brower, Grand Valley State University
Jacob Butterfield, Washington University of Topeka
Francisco Calderon, Humboldt State University
Katie Campbell, Montana State University Billings
Jonathan Cosme, University of Mount Olive
Jewison Dawkins, Virginia Union University
Sara DeSmet, Southwest Minnesota State University
Jonathan Dicke, Southwest Minnesota State University
Christina Dickson, Simon Fraser University
Jack Duguid, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
Adam Farrell, University of North Georgia
Nicole Floyd, Virginia Union University
Rachel Fraser, Wayne State College (Nebraska)
Michael Agostini Gangwish, Colorado School of Mines
William Gee, Anderson University (South Carolina)
Hannah Glover, University of Mount Olive
Charles Goble, Augusta University
Rani Goodland, St. Mary’s University (Texas)
Hannah Guy, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Nathan Hale, California State University, San Marcos
Kristen Hamlin, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
Jobi Heath, University of Central Oklahoma
Lydia Heimonen, Lake Superior State University
Kyle Hoops, West Chester University of Pennsylvania
Michelle Jahn, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Sven Jeuschede, Montana State University Billings
Kamaria Johnson, Nova Southeastern University
Allison Johnson, Winona State University
Alexis Jones, LeMoyne-Owen College
Trevin Joseph, Wayne State College (Nebraska)
Hanna Justesen, Augustana University (South Dakota)
Katherine Killion, University of Central Oklahoma
Lawson King, University of North Georgia
Raquel Kulak, Flagler College
John Landry, University of Central Oklahoma
Allison Lipovsky, Grand Valley State University
Martin Lopez, Saint Martin’s University
Todd Lovas III, Saginaw Valley State University
Marisa Lovos, California State University, Monterey Bay
Tyler Lus, California State University, San Marcos
Erin McDaniel, University of Montevallo
Taylor McCray, Colorado School of Mines
Sadie Mensing, Central Washington University
Makena Mucciaccio, University of Central Oklahoma
Maximilian Nilges, Mississippi College
Sushakorn Numbbakhdi, Arkansas Tech University
Laura Nunez-Rodriguez, Wingate University
Olivia Olson, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Hailee Olson, University of Findlay
Baylee Peck, Tarleton State University
Noel Perugini, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Phonephat Phavang, Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Peerada Piddon, Arkansas Tech University
Jaci Pittman, Lincoln Memorial University
Justin Plane, Barton College
Tanner Poole, University of Mount Olive
Olivia Powell, Washburn University of Topeka
Patrick Power, Christian Brothers University
Shelby Quinn, Lindsey Wilson University
Bailey Quinn, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania
Alanna Robinson, University of New Haven
Javier Saez Gatica, Christian Brothers University
Kylee Sakaguchi, Colorado State University-Pueblo
Abigail Sallot, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Victoria Schoonard-Saborio, Texas A&M University-Kingsville
John Sechen, University of Illinois at Springfield
Alexa Shindruk, Central Washington University
Morgan Sikon, University of Wisconsin-Parkside
Jemal Smith, Virginia Union University
Lori Sturgill, Shepherd University
Breanna Taphouse, University of Tampa
Savannah Taylor, Adelphi University
Cristian Vasquez Tapia Vera, Lindsey Wilson University
Celeste Villagran, California State University, Monterey Bay
Lyrik Williams, Arkansas Tech University
Makena Wilson, Florida Southern College
Lorah Yonce, University of Alabama in Huntsville
Bailie Zuber, University of Alabama in Huntsville
Members of the 2018-19 NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee express some jocularity at last year's NCAA Convention.

JAMIE SCHWABEROW/NCAA PHOTOS
A SAAC is Born

Sometimes the success of an initiative can be measured by how it becomes part of the natural fabric of the organization it serves. Take the NCAA’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee concept, for example. Most people who work for or are involved with the NCAA just assume the SAAC has always been part of the Association’s governance system. But it’s been only about 30 years that the formalized avenue for student-athletes to voice their opinion has been in place.

And what a 30 years it’s been for the SAAC.

At the 1989 Convention the NCAA adopted legislation that established an Association-wide Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Its stated charge was primarily to review and offer student-athlete input on NCAA activities and proposed legislation that affected student-athlete well-being.

Then-NCAA Executive Director Richard D. Schultz in his “State of the Association” speech at the 1989 Convention highlighted the legislation to establish the committee (Proposal No. 77 for you legislative wonks out there) as being among the more important legislative items facing the Association at that time.

“It is time our student-athletes are consulted and have an opportunity to react to the things we are saying are for their best,” Schultz told Convention delegates.

He went on to call the establishment of the committee “a giant step forward for the Association,” and that the group eventually could be expanded and represent “a powerful innovation for the student-athlete.”
The initial national committee was composed of 16 student-athletes from all membership divisions (eight from Division I and four each from Divisions II and III) to ensure that the student-athlete voice was one that accounted for the myriad educational and athletics experiences of both female and male student-athletes at all NCAA member institutions.

The single Association-wide committee (which grew to 28 members) stood until August 1997 when the NCAA federated along divisional lines. The federation, or split among divisions, caused the SAAC to federate as well. Presently, there are three SAACs representing Divisions I, II and III.

Each national divisional committee is composed of both female and male student-athletes charged with the responsibility of helping form NCAA legislation. This is accomplished by providing student-athlete input on issues related to student-athlete well-being that are division-specific. Federation has increased student-athlete participation in the governance process of intercollegiate athletics by increasing the number of SAAC members from the former Association-wide committee of 28 student-athletes to a sum total of 78 members serving on the national Divisions I, II and III committees.

The input of the respective Divisions I, II and III SAACs continues to be sought by a variety of constituencies within the Association. Division II SAAC members have voting privileges on a number of governance committees, including the Division II Management Council, and the Division II SAAC also votes on legislative proposals from the Division II Convention floor.

**Initial SAAC Roster, 1989**

**DIVISION I**
- David Berkoff
  Swimming, Harvard University
- Leslie Daland
  Swimming, University of Southern California
- Mark Deady
  Track and Field, Indiana University, Bloomington
- Kristi Groteke
  Track and Field, Manhattan College
- Richard Lucas
  Basketball, University of Oregon
- Sue Nissen
  Basketball, Central Michigan University
- Todd Sandroni
  Football, University of Mississippi
- Wendy Scholtens
  Basketball, Vanderbilt University

**DIVISION II**
- Forrest Barnes
  Basketball, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- Cindy Erickson
  Volleyball, Lake Superior State University
- Kathleen Fitzgibbons
  Track and Field, Bentley College
- Jeffrey Hayes
  Basketball, North Carolina Central University

**DIVISION III**
- Matthew Galvin
  Soccer, Skidmore College
- Ian Grover
  Football, Simpson College
- Robert Lipp
  Soccer, Ohio Northern University
- Julie Zuraw
  Basketball, Bryn Mawr College
It is truly an honor to work with DII SAAC and collaborate with some of the very best student-athletes in the NCAA who strive to enhance the student-athlete experience for all on a daily basis. We all must listen carefully to the student-athlete voice. That voice allows them to influence their athletics experience. It is our job as administrators to attempt to make positive change to enhance and provide the experience the student-athletes desire.

Jessica Chapin  
Interim Director of Athletics at American International College (Management Council liaison to the Division II SAAC)

As a faculty athletics representative, hearing firsthand from student-athletes about their on-campus experiences is invaluable as I strive to not only improve the experience for the student-athletes on my own campus, but to help shape policy on a national level that will improve the experience for all Division II student-athletes. The students who serve on the DII SAAC are an amazing group and a constant reminder of the leaders that are being shaped on our campuses, in part because of their participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Marty Gilbert  
Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Faculty Athletics Representative at Mars Hill University (Management Council liaison to the Division II SAAC)

The Division II SAAC has become a force in the division’s governance and decision-making processes, and it also has become a prestigious appointment for student-athletes who reap the benefits of establishing connections with peers that often develop into lifelong friendships, but also developing professionally through experiences that come with national exposure. Many SAAC members have gone on to work in athletics administration themselves.

The Division II SAAC’s mission is to enhance the voice of the student-athlete to ensure the total student-athlete experience by promoting opportunity for all student-athletes, protecting student-athlete well-being and fostering a positive student-athlete image.

Principles to guide that premise include an emphasis on ethics; integrity; fairness; and a respect for diversity and inclusion, which includes but is not limited to gender, race, ethnicity and sport.

Division II SAAC’s purpose is meant to reflect the voice of the student-athlete. The well-being of student-athletes is at the center of what the SAAC does. SAAC members make it a point to ensure that any process considered is flexible and timely and must include effective communication. Decisions must be fair and reasonable and consider the potential impact on all student-athletes.
To date the Division II SAAC has contributed to dozens of significant initiatives and has presented a thoughtful and persuasive voice on legislative proposals from the NCAA Convention floor.

Among the more recent initiatives on which the Division II SAAC has taken the lead are:

- Developing the “Make It Yours” brand enhancement for the division, which empowers student-athletes to enjoy a balanced higher education experience that is enhanced by – not dominated by – their athletics participation.
- A strong and influential voice on issues affecting student-athlete mental wellness, student-athlete time demands, countable athletically related activities (CARA) and the associated “voluntold” activities; and taking a stand against sexual assault.
- The “Total Package Student-Athlete” initiative launched just this year that focuses on mental wellness (Total), diversity and inclusion (Package), professional development (Student) and enjoyment of sports participation at the youth level through the Love2Play initiative (Athlete).
- Creation and selection of the annual Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award. The award, named after Pariser, a physical therapy professor at Bellarmine University who passed away in 2013, honors faculty members at Division II schools for their dedicated support and mentorship of student-athletes, and for demonstrating the same commitment to Division II student-athletes’ lifelong learning, competition, and well-being.
- Developing strategies that encourage Division II institutional and conference SAACs to use Helper Helper, which is an online community engagement platform that makes it simple for schools and organizations to connect student-athletes to meaningful volunteer experiences and track their community engagement efforts.
- Creating an annual “Super Region” convention to enhance student-athlete participation in the governance structure and enable student-athletes and administrators to better understand issues affecting Division II student-athletes.
- Development of a SAAC Network, an information-sharing resource that links national SAAC and Division II SAAC liaisons with the SAAC president and SAAC advisor at every Division II institution. The network provides information and comment on issues relevant to Division II student-athletes. The interactive network also allows campus SAACs to share best practices and ask for suggestions from peers.

The SAAC Structure

PURPOSE
The purpose of the student-athlete advisory committee may vary across conferences and institutions. However, the following five points reflect the primary purposes of SAAC and should serve as a guideline when developing the SAAC’s strategic plan:

- Generate a student-athlete voice within the institution;
- Solicit student-athlete response to proposed NCAA legislation;
- Suggest potential NCAA legislation;
- Organize community engagement efforts; and
- Create a vehicle for student-athlete representation on campus-wide or conference-wide committees.

CONNECTION TO NCAA AND CONFERENCE OFFICES
In 1995, the NCAA adopted legislation requiring each institution to create a student-athlete advisory committee. In addition, every conference was required to create its own committee. That led to each institution’s SAAC having a communication link with the national SAAC, either directly or through a conference student-athlete advisory committee. Division II also has since established the SAAC Network, which includes information-sharing resources that link national SAAC and Division II SAAC liaisons with the SAAC president and SAAC advisor at every Division II institution. The network provides information and comment on issues relevant to Division II student-athletes. The interactive network also allows campus SAACs to share best practices and ask for suggestions from peers.

KEY ROLES IN THE STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- NCAA SAAC Liaison – The NCAA national office liaisons to the SAAC facilitate the national SAAC’s efforts by providing leadership, administrative and managerial resources, information, and implementing the decisions made by the committee.
- National SAAC Representative – The role of the national SAAC representative is to be present and an active participant at all conference and national SAAC meetings and work as a liaison among the institutional, conference and national SAACs. The conference SAAC representative should be aware of issues and updates from both the conference and the NCAA, which affect all the institutions and conferences, and will be held to the same attendance and communication requirements as national SAAC representatives where applicable.
- Conference SAAC Liaison – The role of the conference SAAC liaison is to oversee development of the agenda, perform administrative responsibilities such as keeping the minutes and roster, manage the budget and perhaps manage a list serve comprised of conference SAAC representatives. It is a challenging balance between being the leader of the meeting and being a resource for the meetings; however, the liaison’s responsibility is to be a resource and guide for the student-athletes as they set their own agenda and complete their tasks.
- SAAC Executive Board – The NCAA recommends the creation of an executive board to oversee the operation of any student-athlete advisory committee. Traditional board member positions include chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer.
Meet the NCAA Division II SAAC

Chair
ALEX SHILLOW
Football, Texas A&M University-Commerce • Lone Star Conference

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?
So far I am most proud of graduating with my bachelor's degree in three years as of August 2019. Athletics-wise, my proudest accomplishment is winning the 2017 Division II Football Championship.

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?
The new goal we established focusing on professional development this year. I believe student-athletes should make it a point to prepare for life after sport, specifically focusing on what they can do while in college to equip them with the right tools and prepare them for the working world.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn't have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy? Sport Management by far. Sport has so many layers and has world-wide impact. Knowing how much change, hope, and happiness it can bring to people around the world is so amazing when learning about different ways to govern and manage this vast area.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
Athletics administration. I want to become an athletics director one day because I have a passion for positively influencing young people through sport, and the 18-24 age group is a vital one on which to make that impression.

Vice Chair
DEIONTAE NICHOLAS
Football, Wayne State University (Michigan) • Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference

What is the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
Meeting all the amazing athletes from around the nation and working together to create change for Division II. That’s the best thing to grow relationships – collaborating to create change. Having the power we do is an honorable responsibility, and this is an experience of a lifetime.

What is the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
The “It” to me means, well, whatever you want it to mean. That’s the power of the Division II brand. Every student-athlete is different and has a compelling story. So, the “It” is an open-ended invitation for everyone to write their own story. None of the “Its” will be the same, and that freedom is the amazing part about being in Division II.

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?
My mother, Cicely Nicholas. She emulates selflessness, kindness, and a great sense of humor. She shows me constantly that the trials we face hinder us only as long as we let them.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn't have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy? Communication, whether that be through a medium or in person. I am excited about the tools I’ve learned through communication, and it has become a lifelong skill for me as it is useful in any capacity of life.

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?
Creating a balance for student-athletes. Life, school and sports should be as enjoyable as possible with a great mindset to achieve goals in all areas. There is always pressure and stress to be great in every aspect, but we have found ways to lessen that stress through support and various initiatives.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
Sports administration and helping student-athletes develop their capacity to contribute to society. I also plan on creating my own business that aims to implement practices to increase mental health and leadership because it is my passion and there’s a need for it.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
It’s the people every single time. The people that are a part of the Division II SAAC have become friends of mine and some relationships will last a lifetime. The support here is incredible and the amount of like-minded people creates an incredible culture.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
The experiences and contacts you gain from people and the connections you make with people is what life is all about! The experiences I’ve had during college are the result of me coming into college with a positive and strong-willed mindset to take advantage of the opportunities presented to me.
ALEXIA AUTREY
Swimming and Diving, King University • Conference Carolinas

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?
My mom. Anytime I need someone to lift me up, she is always there. My mom and I have very similar personalities. The trait that we most share is our drive to help others.

How has your Division II athletics experience helped you achieve balance in your life?
Division II athletics has taught me that I can enjoy several things in life at once. I am a student first and an athlete second, but I also have a social life in between.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
I always said I would never enjoy a business class. My freshman year I was enrolled in economics. Going into the class I did not think I would enjoy it, but I loved the course. I love the challenge of having to see things in a different light.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
I plan to earn my master’s in both business and English. I then plan to pursue marketing.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
Being able to make a difference.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Making an impact. Whether I am in a class or at a meet, I want to make a positive impact. That is what “Make It Yours” means to me.

GILLIAN EDGAR
Rowing, Seattle Pacific University • Great Northwest Athletic Conference

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
I was a nursing major my first two years at SPU. I did not expect to become a business finance major. I would have never guessed that I especially love my accounting classes. I love the organization and logic and the information that accounting provides to make small- and large-scale decisions.

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?
I do not have a specific event or project that I am most proud of, but a characteristic that I have developed – resilience. I went into college planning on running track, majoring in nursing, and graduating in four years. Doors to all three of those expectations have been closed for one reason or another, and I am most proud of how I handled those situations and grew from them.

How has your Division II athletics experience helped you achieve balance in your life?
By emphasizing high standards in all I do now, but also considering my future. My coaches and administrators are very passionate about performing well athletically, but they also stress how the lessons I learn in practice or a competition can be applied to many situations in my future. Being a DII athlete has helped me have that kind of practical perspective in all that I do.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
I am interested in administrative work for college and professional sports and have been talking with many people in the industry regarding their experiences. Finance has always been a passion of mine, so integrating the sports and finance world would be my ideal career.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
The people I meet. I get to meet such an extensive range of athletes from different sports and backgrounds and majors, yet we still all have the common passion for the student-athlete experience. It is an amazing experience to have such a diverse group of people come together for the same purpose.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
My experience as a student-athlete. Being a DII athlete, I have been provided with so many opportunities to create whatever experience I want and need in college. It is important that I take ownership of my experience and help others learn to do the same.
KRISTINA ORTIZ  
Golf, Lynn University • Sunshine State Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?  
There are many people who have had a positive influence on me as a person and throughout my life. First are my family. My family means the world to me. I am definitely who I am today because of all of the love and support they have given me throughout my life. Second are the wonderful people I have met throughout my time as a student-athlete and on National SAAC. The impact they have had on me will definitely lead me to follow my future career path. Each individual has left their mark through their kindness, work ethic and passion, which are traits I try to emulate throughout my life.

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?  
I am passionate about all of the issues the Division II SAAC has addressed thus far, but what stands out most is our partnership with Make-A-Wish and Team IMPACT.

What would you most like to be known for?  
The passion and kindness that I express toward others. I am very lucky to have people in my life who treat me with kindness and respect, and it is my wish to be able to spread that kindness to others.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?  
A career in college athletics. I have had an amazing experience as a student-athlete, and I would love to help other student-athletes reach their highest potential.

What's the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?  
The opportunity I have to provide a voice for other student-athletes and to help enhance the student-athlete experience for all.

What's the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?  
All of the opportunities a Division II student-athlete is given. Division II student-athletes truly can make their academic and athletics experience their own.

Nicholas Ely  
Baseball, Notre Dame College (Ohio) • Mountain East Conference

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?  
Aside from being appointed to Division II SAAC – because that is without a doubt my personal top accomplishment – it would have to be what we have been able to do with SAAC at my institution. Twice while I was a member, we raised enough funds for a Make-A-Wish reveal. While they are still waiting for the second reveal, to see the impact we had on one girl’s life and to be able to be the ones to tell her she was going to Hawaii was remarkable. Seeing our entire school and our athletes come together throughout the year as one entity to raise money for a fantastic cause is what it’s all about for me.

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?  
I would say it is a tie between mental health awareness and Love2Play. Mental health hits close to home as I have battled some issues and will always be someone advocating for more things like research, resources, and people to raise awareness.

Love2Play is an initiative we took on because too many kids are “specializing” in one sport at such a young age that they miss out on others. Research has shown that a young athlete’s body and coordination develop faster and at much more all-around rates when playing multiple sports. Also, we want kids to have fun. These are games, and games, especially when you are young, are supposed to be fun and be spent making friends along the way.

What would you most like to be known for?  
My honesty, trustworthiness, character, and leadership. I pride myself on those four components of life and constantly work to improve in any way possible. If your peers view you as a leader that they trust with high character, you will have earned their respect. Once you have someone’s respect, they are willing to work that much harder with you to achieve a common goal.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?  
I would like to pursue a career in sales, either with medical devices, the sports industry, or possibly spirits. However, I would also like the opportunity to stay and work in college athletics so I will be looking into both fields upon completing my master’s degree.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?  
Without a doubt the people – athletes and liaisons included. To be surrounded by the nation’s best leaders has truly been a blessing. Collaborating on ideas with fellow athletes from all over the country is a special opportunity that none of us take for granted. I can honestly say I have not only met some of the most incredible people while serving on SAAC, but I have met some lifelong best friends, too. We are truly a family and I would never trade this experience for anything.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?  
The entire college experience, both as an athlete and as a student. You only go to college for a few years before you head off into whatever professional field you wish to pursue, and I think NCAA Division II wants to make sure you, individually, do everything you can to have that top-notch experience. That experience differs from person to person as it is unique to them specifically, but Division II offers countless avenues for one to pursue, and it’s all about getting the most out of whatever avenue you choose.
SHONTÉ CARGILL
Cross Country and Softball, Bluefield State College • Independents

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?

A person who has had a positive influence on my life is Rachel Scott. Rachel was the first person killed in the Columbine massacre in 1999. I first heard her story in 9th grade when her brother, who was a Columbine survivor, came and spoke to my freshman class. In his presentation he preached her message of one simple act of kindness will start a chain reaction. Since that day my goal has been to do one act of kindness, no matter how simple, once a day in hopes that I am the start of a positive chain reaction.

What has most surprised you about your college athletics experience?

The sense of family I was able to experience through athletics. I knew I would bond with members of my team, but what I did not know was the bond I would form with other athletes. College athletes are a unique breed of people. I can meet another student-athlete in the airport and instantly feel a bond with them. I now have friends across the globe from several different sports that I never thought I would have, and it is a pretty amazing thing!

What would you like to be known for?

For being kind. Records will be broken and championships will be forgotten, but it is amazing how long one simple act of kindness will stick with a person.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I intend to earn my master’s degree and become a licensed professional counselor. I want to help those battling mental illnesses and help them go on to live productive, satisfying lives.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

Being able to represent more than 120,000 student-athletes and help give them a voice in such a big organization. It is amazing the amount of people who genuinely want to hear the student-athlete voice and are willing to make changes accordingly.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

Your college athletics experience as a whole. Your “It” can also be whatever drives or motivates you. It means that everyone has the opportunity to customize their own experience and find what drives them.

TAYLER STOVER
Internal Operations Coordinator
Soccer, Rogers State University • At-Large

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?

My mother. She has been there with and for me every endeavor that I seek. I try to emulate her compassion, thoughtfulness toward others, and her ability to keep a level head in any situation.

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?

My proudest college accomplishment is winning the Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition (IGVC) in June 2018 as co-captain. The IGVC is an annual robotics competition in which engineering schools across the country and some international schools compete.

What has most surprised you about your college athletics experience?

The concept of the family I have been able to bond and develop with. I knew I would bond with members of my team, but I never thought I would forge such strong relationships with the opposing team's athletes as well. It has been amazing to see how college athletics can sometimes make a bond stronger than that of a family.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I’d like to pursue a career in engineering, with a focus on renewable energy, energy conservation, and consulting. I also intend to pursue small-scale fabrication of customized and customizable items.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

Not only am I able to represent my peers at a national level and voice the concerns and situations that student-athletes across the country are facing, but DI SAAC is like a family that makes you feel welcomed and want to be heard. It allows you to step out of your comfort zone and grow as an individual.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

Your college athletics experience as a whole. Your “It” can also be whatever drives or motivates you. It means that everyone has the opportunity to customize their own experience and find what drives them.
JACK NICHOLSON
Soccer, St. Thomas Aquinas College • East Coast Conference

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?
Right now it's mental health. This is such an important topic and it is critical to reduce the stigma that surrounds mental health and convince student-athletes and coaches that it’s okay to address the issues.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy? Probably business law. I took a real interest into how much companies have to go through in order to keep in line with the rule books.

LAUREN YACKS
Softball, University of Findlay • Great Midwest Athletic Conference

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?
Division II National SAAC addresses a variety of issues regarding the student-athlete experience. The one that I am most passionate about is mental health. The topic of student-athlete mental health has been at the forefront of conversations from the beginning of my time on National SAAC. As someone who had anxiety as a child, I have experienced firsthand the stigma surrounding mental health. We have made significant strides in this area by opening conversations about how mental health doesn’t just mean a diagnosis. In Division II we are showing that we are united on this issue and that no one has to work through it alone.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation? I am pursuing a master’s degree in occupational therapy with an eventual certification in Hand Therapy. The focus of occupational therapy is to help individuals who have experienced an illness or injury stay engaged in activities that are significant and meaningful whether that be simple self-care, community involvement or leisure pursuits. In doing so, we provide individuals the tools and skills to complete those activities at any functional ability or any point in the rehabilitation process.

What's the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you? The college experience. How are you going to approach this and make the most of what is in front of you? The answer to that question could be how you stand out from the rest.
MADELEINE MCKENNA
Volleyball, California University of Pennsylvania • Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?
My parents. They are both able to balance being strong, tough and independent with compassion, kindness and empathy, which is a combination of characteristics I have tried to emulate.

What has most surprised you about your college athletics experience?
Being appointed to the DII National SAAC. When I joined my university’s SAAC, I didn’t quite know what I was getting myself into. In fact I originally joined SAAC because my coaches had told me it would be similar to the “spirit club” I helped lead in high school. Needless to say, I was definitely in for some surprises when I attended my first meeting! Now I am so thankful for the opportunities SAAC has granted me at the campus, conference and national levels.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
I entered college as an athletic training major and was dead set on sticking with it for all four years, but halfway through my first semester I absolutely fell in love with psychology and immediately changed my major. I enjoy the way psychology allows you to balance the analytical side of science with creative problem solving in clinical settings. I also enjoy the way psychology allows you to gain a better understanding of a person’s experiences, thoughts and behaviors.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
I plan on attending graduate school to earn my PhD in clinical psychology. I hope to have my own private practice in which I have the opportunity to listen to people and help them work through the various problems they may be experiencing. Additionally, I would like to have a concentration in psychopathology and potentially consult on criminal cases for insanity pleas/competency to stand trial.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
All of the amazing people I’ve been fortunate to meet so far. Everyone is so kind, welcoming and passionate about all aspects of the student-athlete experience. It’s so great to be surrounded by people who care about the same things I do who really want to make an impact.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Your college experience as a whole. Division II gives athletes the ability to compete within their sports at a high level, while also taking advantage of a number of other opportunities. For me, these opportunities include being involved in SAAC, taking an active leadership role on my campus and building relationships with my professors, peers and administrators. Making the most of my college experience, from volleyball, to my academics, to trying to make a positive impact on my university, is what “Make It Yours” is all about.

BRAYDON KUBAT
Cross Country and Track and Field, University of Minnesota Duluth • Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?
My mother. She entered me into my first race and supported me throughout my athletics career. She has the greatest work ethic I have ever witnessed.

How has your Division II athletics experience helped you achieve balance in your life?
By transitioning the skills I develop in practice and competition to my academics, relationships with others and my professional development.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
Computer programming and operating systems have become extremely interesting to me. It has allowed me to push my creativity to new levels and develop solutions to complicated problems.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
I wish to enroll in the United States military or become a certified professional engineer.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
Having the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with like-minded individuals and work together to create an unbelievable student-athlete experience.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Creating memories with my teammates, coaches and community that will provide a foundation for enjoying life and building an influential career.
MARY NORTHCUTT  
Swimming and Diving, Carson-Newman University • South Atlantic Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?

My Grandfather, Joel Shapiro, has had the greatest influence on my life. He was a very educated man who lived his life with a strong moral code. Early in his life he fought in World War II and those moments forever shaped the person he was. I try to always treat individuals the way he did, with the utmost respect and dignity. Additionally, standing up for what I believe in no matter what the cost is.

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?

I have been able to be on a 200-freestyle relay team that has placed in the top eight at our national championships each of my three years. Being on a relay team is one of my favorite things about swimming because you are truly swimming for the team and not just for yourself. I am incredibly proud of myself, and the other girls I’ve swum this relay with, to be able to call ourselves All-Americans.

What has most surprised you about your college athletics experience?

Community. Looking back to my freshman year I never would have guessed that I would have the sense of community I now have. The relationships I gained through college athletics are something I will always cherish.

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?

Mental health. This was an issue that I dealt with firsthand throughout college athletics and am very passionate about. As a student-athlete and leader on our campuses, we need to do all we can to end sexual violence.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I apply to Physical Therapy School soon, so wish me luck!

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

The connections I have made. DII SAAC has given me the opportunity to meet incredible people who are all very driven and passionate. The friendships and the experiences I have had are something that I will carry with me forever.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

Your unique college experience. The “It” is about writing your story, which includes academics and athletics and everything in between.
Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?

My grandmother. Ever since I can remember all she has been about has been service and giving. She always tells me that “service is the rent we pay for a room on this earth.” She served on the city council for 25 years and served as the first African-American female mayor of Greensboro, N.C. I try to emulate her genuine attitude to give more than I receive. I am a firm believer that you will be blessed in return.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?

Intro to Business. When I was in high school I knew exactly what I wanted to be and that was a physical therapist. Now that I have completed two years of college at WSSU, my interests have changed. I enjoy the course because the skills you need in the business world can be adapted to any field you choose to pursue. Also, business keeps you on your toes because you have to remain innovative to stay relevant.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I plan to pursue a career in pediatric nursing. I’m not certain which healthcare setting I will work in, but I am excited to see what the future holds for me.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

So far it has been the people I have met. Everyone has been so welcoming, and it has been incredible to see how passionate everyone is about making Division II athletics so great. The people who serve on or work with the Division II SAAC are my kind of people, and I believe they make Division II athletics the unique and amazing experience that it is.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?

In my first semester of college, I ended up enrolled in an honors introductory philosophy course that challenged me to think differently about the world. I loved that there weren’t conclusive answers; I could ask one question and be guided in a hundred different directions, which gave me the opportunity to seek understanding of concepts rather than just memorize facts. Often in academia, we are asked to find the right answer, but this course was all about the gray area. It was awesome.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

Life itself. By being a Division II student-athlete, I have the opportunity to make my college experience everything I want it to be and get to do so surrounded by an incredible community of student-athletes and administrators. My life is driven by everything I am passionate about and I make sure to make every day my own.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

The student-athlete experience. You have only memories to look back on and you don’t believe it until you experience it. The upperclassmen tell you that it will, but you don’t believe it until you experience it. I remember playing my first college game and now I am in going into my third season of college basketball and I am grateful for the opportunity.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

Everyone has been so welcoming, and it has been incredible to see how passionate everyone is about making Division II athletics so great. The people who serve on or work with the Division II SAAC are my kind of people, and I believe they make Division II athletics the unique and amazing experience that it is.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

Being the voice of advocacy, not only for your school but also for your conference.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

The student-athlete experience. You have only four years to make the best you can possibly make out of them. Learning how to balance your academics with your athletics is more than just basketball. It teaches you about life after basketball. When it is all said and done, you have only memories to look back on and you want to be able to say that you capitalized on each year that you were able to play.
OLIVIA FAUGHT
Golf, Southern Arkansas University • Great American Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?

My parents. They have set good examples for me in ways like always being supportive and continually striving to be the best version of themselves. There wasn’t anyone in my family before me who played golf, so they could have easily brushed it off but they wanted to support what I wanted to do and now I play at the collegiate level. Both of my parents push me to do my best and they make me want to continue growing as a person. I pursue living as the best version of myself because I see them doing that every day.

How has your Division II athletics experience helped you achieve balance in your life?

It has shown me the importance of the balance between school and athletics. For the longest time I felt like athletics were the center of my world, I didn’t see much further than the next golf tournament, but being a Division II athlete has shown me how important it is to have my life balanced between academics and athletics. My grades have improved since I have been in college and I’ve made the President’s List three times and the Dean’s List once. My GPA is a 3.95 and I genuinely love both sides of being a student-athlete, both the athletics and the academics.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?

While my major is sports management, I picked an information emphasis to accompany my major. This means that I am in a lot of mass media and communication classes, which I was not sure I would like. I remember taking my first communications class and being so interested in the things we were learning. I actually enjoyed my assignment so much that it almost didn’t even feel like homework. When I picked my emphasis, I did not think that my mass media and communication classes would be some of my favorites.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I know that I want to work in athletics administration. I am currently employed at school as an academic advising assistant in our Health, Kinesiology, and Recreation Department, and that I have been given a deeper look into what I would want to do as a career. I get to see what a compliance officer does and that interests me greatly, but I also entertain the idea of becoming a professor because I do love my degree and what I am learning within it. Due to the passion I have for my degree, I think that I could become a great professor and make an impact on those like me who have a passion for sports management and a desire to learn.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

The connections I have made. Getting to meet others who are interested and have similar values to me continues to be such a wonderful part of this experience. A great part of this has also been being able to help guide student-athletes a voice in Division II. I enjoy being able to represent student-athletes like myself and feel like I get to be a part of the decisions that are shaping their future.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

The opportunities you get in college and making the college experience your own. Make the college experience yours and make the most of every opportunity you’re given.

MICAIHAH PAIGE
Football, Morehouse College • At-Large

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?

My father, Michael Paige, has undoubtedly most influenced my character. My father is a pure-hearted person who keeps pure intentions in everything he does.

What has most surprised you about your college athletics experience?

How athletes can be from completely different corners of the world, yet experience fellowship over one thing they all have in common. Being successful as a collegiate team requires more attention to detail because there are so many differences among the players and coaches that can easily disrupt winning momentum.

What issues that the Division II SAAC is addressing are you most passionate about? Why?

Promotion of the total athlete deals with professionalism, life after sports, and total health beyond just the physical component.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I plan on playing football for as long as I can because this has been a vision of mine from the time the ball touched my hands. Post-football, I plan on earning my doctor of medicine degree with a specialization in orthopedics, as well as earning my doctorate in physical therapy and rehabilitation. I plan on practicing as a sports medicine doctor, then eventually moving onto further business ventures.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?

Simply put, I feel at home. From the moment I met my new SAAC family, I have felt loved, embraced and humbled. Not only do I love being a part of something greater than myself, I love experiencing it with the right people.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

The “It” in “Make It Yours!” encompasses the full experience of not just student-athletes, but coaches and administrators as well. The beauty in this statement is that the experience can be whatever one chooses to make it. This gives everyone apart of the Division II experience a chance to create the best experience possible. Truly making the experience yours should never look exactly the same, because we are all different and constantly changing in numerous ways.
Communications Coordinator

JAKE RENIE
Swimming and Diving, University of Indianapolis • Great Lakes Valley Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate? My mother has had the most influence on me ever since I became serious about becoming a collegiate student-athlete. Teaching me to be passionate in doing what I love, never backing down from my goals, and so much more that can’t fit in this space.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy? Risk management in my sport management major was surprisingly one of my most enjoyable classes in undergrad. I have always enjoyed covering and watching sports, but I never took the time to understand most of the behind-the-scenes work. Building that appreciation through organizing my own events has become a factor for a future in college athletics.

What would you most like to be known for? Mentoring the future leaders of the world. Dedicating my time in National SAAC and placing it in my career post-graduation, I want to better the student-athlete experience and build tomorrow’s leaders.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation? I will be pursuing a career in sports information.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC? The bonds I share with each member is something I never expected. For a group that sees each other only four times a year, I would consider each of them some of my closest peers.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you? Whatever I want it to be. After being medically disqualified as a student-athlete, I wanted to continue to make an impact on the future of college athletics. Division II ended up opening its arms to me and showed me that I was more than a player on the field.

KATE PIGSLEY
Field Hockey, Southern New Hampshire University • Northeast-10 Conference

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)? The fact that this past season the Southern New Hampshire University field hockey team made the playoffs for the first time in program history. It was extremely rewarding for our hard work to pay off.

What would you most like to be known for? My hard work and dedication.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy? Psychology. I really enjoy how it involves the mind and how people interact with each other.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation? I plan on pursuing a career in equipment management. I wish to be able continue my love for sports even in my profession.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC? All of the people I have met. Each and every one of them has inspired me to be the best version of myself and I am forever grateful for that.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you? It relates to everything in life. That “It” reminds me to make the most of each situation I am in and work hard toward achieving my goals.
Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?

My parents. They, throughout my life, have showcased determination and positivity that has been instrumental in my becoming of who I am.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?

Anatomy has really attracted my interest. I thought it would have been a boring science class that I had to take, but I really enjoyed learning about the human body and all the processes and things that help us live and move daily.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?

I plan to pursue a career in high school education. I have a passion for teaching and plan to use it to make a difference in the lives of many.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?

The student-athlete experience. This means I can shape the experience I want from being a Division II student-athlete. I am able to compete at a high level of athletics, while also pursuing a degree in a field in which I am interested, while also being able to have some of the college experiences that a non-student-athlete would be able to have.
ALEXANDRIA RHODES
Tennis, Georgia Southwestern State University • Peach Belt Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?
One of the most positively influential people in my life is my past teammate Gabby Vigil. Gabby would light up a room with her humor and smile. She was one of the hardest working and passionate people I knew. Gabby was known for how real and honest she was, as well as caring. RIP #GV11.

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?
Winning the 2017 CCAA Women's Basketball Tournament and making it to the NCAA DII Tournament. I am also very proud of being named the 2019 CCAA Championship Scholar. Both of these accomplishments being athletic and academic reflect the balance of being a student-athlete.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
I have always loved computers, science, and math. However, while taking general education courses at CSUEB I found a passion for philosophy. Learning the logic within the mind has allowed me to understand more about myself and others on a new level.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
After graduating with my B.S. in Computer Science, I plan to pursue a master's degree in Business Analytics while finishing up my last year of basketball. With both of my degrees, I hope to stay close to athletics in the data science realm.

What is the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
DII SAAC is great in many ways, but first and foremost the people in DII SAAC are all amazing. Secondly, the ability to enact change in the NCAA is one of the biggest aspects I enjoy about DII SAAC. National SAAC members have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our fellow student-athletes.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Making the student-athlete experience my own by taking advantage of every opportunity. The NCAA student-athlete experience is one not many people get to have and therefore should not be taken lightly. After graduation, you will not ever have opportunities like these, so it's important to make the most of it!

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
As a tennis player, a lot of the game is mental. Each player knows they have to be strong and play their own game or else you will succumb to your opponents’ game. The “It” in “Make it Yours,” means that whatever “It” is in your life, athletics or life in general, be YOUR best and completely be YOU, because there’s no one like you. Stand tall and make whatever you are doing or going through completely yours so your opponent can’t take hold and steal your shine.

MADISON SCHILLER
Basketball, California State University, East Bay • California Collegiate Athletic Association

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/traits does this person possess that you try to emulate?
For me, it isn't just one role model. Both my parents have influenced my life in such a positive way that it wouldn't be right to credit only one. My mother has always instilled in me the value of putting others first, always being true to yourself no matter the circumstance, and never giving up. My father has taught me the essence of working hard, to never watch when work is being done, and to focus on making your dreams become a reality. I am so blessed to be able to say that the best influences in my life are my parents. First and foremost, they have both always taught me to keep God first in everything, and for that I am forever grateful.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
I am majoring in computer science because I have always loved computers, science, and math. However, while taking general education courses at CSUEB I found a passion for philosophy. Learning the logic within the mind has allowed me to understand more about myself and others on a new level.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
Honestly, I never knew I would like accounting. This was really shocking to me since I never liked math. I started paying attention in accounting class because I realized that learning it would actually be useful in the future, and I really started enjoying it when all of the numbers lined up!

What's the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
The people. I have never met more true people than these guys. I am so blessed to be a part of such a special committee and to have the ability to broaden my horizons and meet others!

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Winning the 2017 CCAA Women's Basketball Tournament and making it to the NCAA DII Tournament. I am also very proud of being named the 2019 CCAA Championship Scholar.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
I am majoring in computer science because
MADISON HECK  
Lacrosse, Georgian Court University • Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?
My mom has been my biggest supporter throughout my life. No matter what, she is always there for me. Although she supports me, she is always pushing me to be the best version of myself I can possibly be. I wish everyone could have a mom like mine because I couldn’t imagine life without her.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
Accounting. I was extremely nervous to take accounting considering anything with mathematics is not my strong point. The fact that I have an amazing professor also has a lot to do with it. She has told me, “to enjoy the credits and debits of life.” She has not only taught me accounting, but to be accountable in being merciful and kind in everyday life.

What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your college career (athletics or otherwise)?
My development as a person and player. College has thrown a lot of hurdles at me, but I have overcome every last one of them. I feel like with every accomplishment, big or small, it has shaped my character. On an athletics level, I am proud of being one of the leaders who have shaped the mindset on our team as well as going undefeated in conference for the past two years.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
A career pharmaceutical representative. I am very excited to work with people every day as well as help health professionals select drugs and medical equipment to provide the best patient care possible.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
While I’m brand new to the Division II SAAC, I can definitely say it’s the people. They are some of the kindest people I have met during my college experience. It is nice to have people who care as much about school and academics as I do.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Making the best out of your experience as a student-athlete.

GRANT FOLEY  
Soccer, Delta State University • Gulf South Conference

Who has had the most positive influence on you as a person? What characteristics/trait does this person possess that you try to emulate?
My dad. He interacts with others very easily and is always willing to lend a helping hand in any situation, and this generosity and kindness is something that I often try to emulate when I meet new people and strengthen the bond with those I have known for a long time.

What’s the most positive aspect about being part of a college sports team?
The family you create and how they push you to become your best self. When you are on a college sports team, you do everything with your teammates. You practice, play, study, eat and hang out with them. With that much interaction, you create so many connections that you become like brothers. Everyone learns from one another and grows into the best player, student and person they can be together.

What academic subject has attracted your interest that you wouldn’t have expected upon enrolling? What about it do you enjoy?
In 2018-19 I enrolled in two general physics classes that were required for my major. I had taken a physics class before in high school and had a tough time understanding it, so I was not too keen on taking it again. However, although it was just as tough to understand as before, I found myself very interested in the topics that we studied, specifically optics and lenses. I also had a great professor who was very patient with all of his students, and he helped me come through both classes with an A and greatly enjoy what I was learning at the same time.

What career path or profession do you plan to pursue upon graduation?
After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in chemistry with a focus in materials science.

What’s the best thing about being on the Division II SAAC?
Honestly, when I think about the best thing about National SAAC, I can never narrow it down to just one thing. The friends that I have made and the staff that I have met have truly become some of my best and most trusted companions. My role of representing the Gulf South Conference and the responsibilities I have assumed have made me a great deal and sharpened my leadership skills. The places I have visited and events that I have been a part of have been an amazing experience. This committee has given me so much and I am so thankful to be a part of such a fantastic group.

What’s the “It” in “Make It Yours” mean to you?
Making my experience at Delta State mine. It gives me the freedom to improve upon my skills while allowing me to simultaneously have a great time in college and be well prepared for my future.
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