

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.

The phrase “Life in the Balance” surfaced in 2005 with the launch of the division’s Strategic Positioning Platform and was used as a way to package changes in playing and practice seasons in 2010 and 2011. But since then, it has become a mantra that Division II institutions and conferences use to define who they are and what they represent.

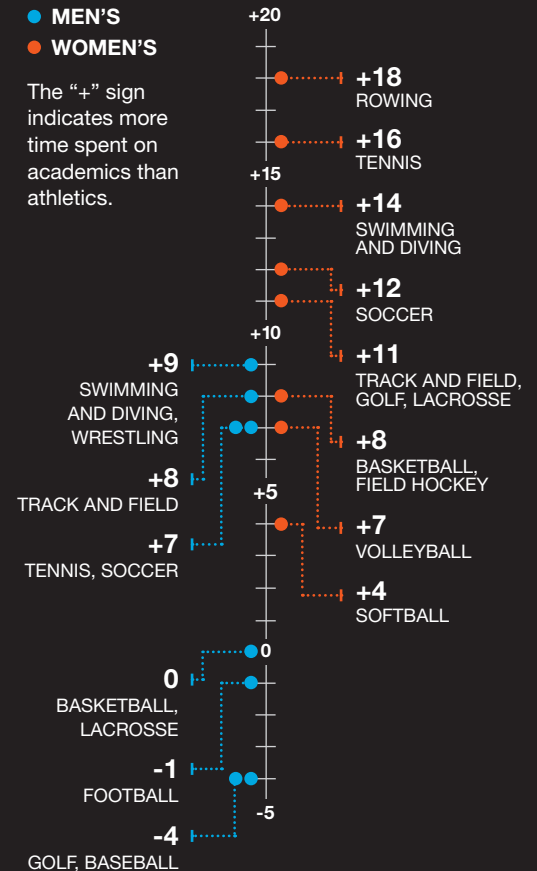
Results from the 2018 Division II Membership Census indicate the vast majority of every constituent group still believe in the balanced approach, and the Division II governance structure continues to work diligently to protect that sense of balance in developing strategic initiatives, legislation and policy.

Balance Benefits:

- ▶ Division II shapes student-athletes who graduate with the skills and knowledge to be productive citizens.
- ▶ Division II students are able to play sports, be integrated in campus life, do well in the classroom and graduate with distinction.
- ▶ Division II students have an excellent opportunity to be highly skilled and highly decorated athletes, but the balanced approach allows them to become marketable in their career because they’ll have time to focus on their academic pursuits, internships, job shadowing, and whatever else it takes to prepare themselves for life after graduation.
- ▶ Division II athletics programs actively engage with their communities, which helps drive attendance at athletics contests, fosters relationships between student-athletes and community members, and develops more of a shared civic experience. Community engagement also strengthens the bond among teammates and fosters individual and personal growth.

ACADEMICS VS. ATHLETICS

Average difference in hours spent per week in-season on Division II academic activities vs. athletics activities.



SOURCE: 2015 NCAA GOALS Study (2015 student-athlete self-report)

Go FAR!



DID YOU KNOW? ... that Division II colleges and universities accommodate more first-generation postsecondary students than any other division? Among a recent sample of approximately 20,000 college athletes, 24 percent of Division II student-athletes reported first-generation status compared with 16 percent in Divisions I and III. If this is the case at your institution, play up that fact with prospective students.

It takes a village to tell the DII story and your institution's narrative. When you're assembling your storytelling team, be sure to place your FAR in a leadership role.

Because faculty athletics representatives are such a vital link in any Division II institution's strategic communications chain, FARs can help explain in a positive manner the complex relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education, which continues to be misunderstood by many external audiences.

- ▶ FARs are uniquely positioned to articulate the benefits of intercollegiate athletics to faculty, the media and the public.
- ▶ FARs bring the academic perspective and priorities to the discussion, providing a fresh point of view to reporters and broadcasters who are accustomed to interacting only with athletics administrators and coaches.
- ▶ As such, FARs are advocates for Division II's "Life in the Balance," as they champion student-athlete academic success and help ensure the quality of the athletics experience.

Classroom Clout

Division II's academic philosophy calls for a comprehensive program of learning and development in a personal setting. Graduation rates indicate the model's success, as student-athletes annually graduate at rates several percentage points higher than their student body counterparts. Also, Division II established an "Academic Success Rate" in 2006, which, unlike the federal graduation rate, measures graduation outcomes for athletes who are not receiving athletically related financial aid (it also includes transfers and mid-year enrollees).



Division II Graduation Rates (2007-10 Cohorts)

CATEGORY	STUDENT BODY FEDERAL RATE	STUDENT-ATHLETE FEDERAL RATE	ASR
DIVISION II OVERALL	49%	55%	72%
DIVISION II MEN	45%	48%	64%
DIVISION II WOMEN	53%	65%	85%

Question

How do your student-athlete graduation rates compare with these national percentages? Be sure to include the good news in your recruiting materials.