



# Making It Yours

While the “Make It Yours” brand enhancement has helped market the division, it’s also a great way to promote athletics at your institution. Just as people might ask you what Division II represents, they also might wonder what Make It Yours is all about.

## Here’s what we think Make It Yours means for Division II members:

- ▶ It’s making graduation a priority.
- ▶ It’s about earning scholarship dollars for your athletic ability and competing for national championships.
- ▶ It’s making athletics participation truly part of the college experience rather than just one aspect of it.
- ▶ It’s making lifelong friends at a campus whose size affords a more intimate setting.
- ▶ It’s the university president seeing students on campus and being able to call them by name and ask how things are going.
- ▶ It’s making the academic experience more personal.
- ▶ It’s about professors, coaches and staff caring for you as a student.
- ▶ It’s about an experience in which you can be an active participant.
- ▶ It’s about a campus that is tight-knit enough to respond to individual student needs.
- ▶ It’s about having coaches who help athletes develop their resumes as much as their athletics skills.
- ▶ It’s about a custom-fit approach to athletics and education rather than a one-size-fits-all direction.



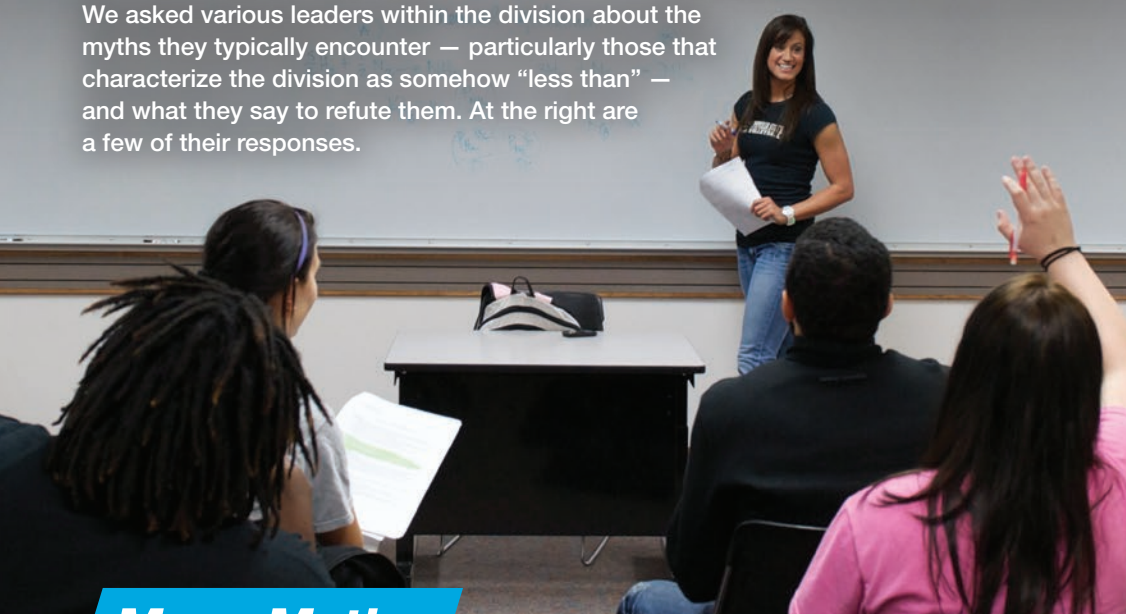
### Question

**How many of these statements apply to your institution?** Probably ALL of them. So take advantage of these distinctions as you define your institution and your athletics program locally. The “Make It Yours” message will resonate with your constituents – and it also will attract more students to your campus.

# Tackling the Myths

Myth and misperception are germs when it comes to keeping your brand healthy. Don't let others define you based on myth.

We asked various leaders within the division about the myths they typically encounter — particularly those that characterize the division as somehow “less than” — and what they say to refute them. At the right are a few of their responses.



## More Myths

**MYTH:** Division II athletics programs place winning above education.

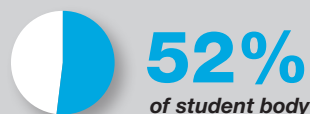
**FACT:** Just as the student-athletes choose to focus more on their education, Division II colleges and universities create infrastructures that put education first with low student-professor ratios and supportive coaches who aren't bothered by classes or labs that cut into practice time. Also, because Division II athletics programs aren't required to be self-sustaining financially, there's less pressure to corporatize or develop a win-at-all-costs mentality in order to fund the department, which also helps protect education as the priority.

**MYTH:** Division II athletes are forced into certain academic majors to protect eligibility.

**FACT:** Research about undergraduate degrees students and student-athletes earn at NCAA Division II institutions actually show similar field-of-study patterns between student-athletes and the general student body.

### STUDENT-ATHLETE VS. STUDENT BODY DEGREES EARNED

A 2015-16 study of undergraduate degrees earned showed Division II student-athletes' fields of studies mirror those of the general student body. Here is the percentage comparison of students earning degrees in business, STEM and social science:



The myths and the misperceptions out there, whether they come from internal stakeholders or from external audiences, are almost always because of a lack of information. And they can sound defensive, but I am never defensive when I address them. What I do is talk about providing a first-class experience for our student-athletes. That's what we're in this to accomplish.

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We're always asked to distinguish Division II from Division I. It doesn't matter whether you're new to the division or you've been in Division II for many years. What we've done is to sit down as a staff and determine what our own distinguishing attributes and characteristics are. I would advise anyone just joining the division to build within your department that uniform culture of communication about what you represent as a Division II institution.

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When I talk to prospects and their families about what they'll experience at our institution, I emphasize the student aspect. I talk about the regional focus, resulting in reduced travel and missed class time. Our student-athletes have the ability to do both — being a student and an athlete — very well in Division II.

### Question

**Do you have to refute myths about your own institution? What's your approach?**