

What is Division II?



What do you say when people ask you this question?

As a Division II member, you know what the division stands for and how your office operates accordingly, but do other constituents on your campus and in your community understand those distinctions? Even if your audiences are familiar with the NCAA and its three-division membership structure, do they know what distinguishes Division II?

Any response to “What is Division II?” should emphasize:

- ▶ ***Our commitment to academic success;***
- ▶ ***Our ability to award athletics scholarships;***
- ▶ ***Our unparalleled access to NCAA championships; and***
- ▶ ***Our balanced approach that allows student-athletes to “Make It Yours” — to experience all the campus and surrounding community have to offer.***

Need an “elevator speech”? Try this one:

“Division II is all about balance. Our students participate in highly competitive athletics, have ample access to NCAA championships and can earn athletics scholarships, but sports participation doesn’t dominate their college experience. The balanced approach in athletics, academics and civic engagement allows Division II student-athletes to focus on their academic pursuits, their grades, their internships, their studies abroad, and whatever else it takes to prepare them for life after graduation.”

Too formal? How about:

“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.”

Need more? See the flip side for additional Division II distinctions.

The Distinguishing Dozen

- 1 | Graduation rates**
The Division II student-athlete graduation rate is consistently higher than that of the total student body. Division II also features a high number of first-generation college students, thus increasing the access to education.
- 2 | Academic emphasis**
Division II's regionalization philosophy in scheduling reduces missed class time for student-athletes.
- 3 | Athletics scholarships**
The partial athletics scholarship model rewards student-athletes' athletic ability while allowing them to earn other sources of financial aid. A recent study on the financial impact of the partial scholarship model found that, in general, scholarship student-athletes benefit institutions' overall academic profile, and the partial aid model generates revenue for the school.
- 4 | Balanced bottom line**
The median expense for Division II athletics departments with football is roughly \$6.5 million, while that figure is about \$17 million for Division I Football Championship Subdivision programs and about \$71 million for programs in the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision.
- 5 | Favorable admission rates**
Division II membership is split almost evenly between public and private institutions. On average, Division II schools have the highest admission rate (70 percent, versus 62-63 percent in the other two divisions).
- 6 | Community engagement**
Through student-athlete leadership, Division II has enjoyed long-term and successful partnerships with the Make-A-Wish Foundation®, Team IMPACT® and military groups. In addition, Division II conducts community engagement activities at all championships final sites.
- 7 | Positive game environment**
Division II members pledge to conduct athletics contests in a family-friendly environment that is civil and entertaining.
- 8 | Unique geographical footprint**
Division II is the only NCAA division with schools in Alaska (Anchorage and Fairbanks), Puerto Rico (Bayamon, Mayaguez and Rio Piedras) and Canada (Simon Fraser). The division also approved legislation to welcome applications from schools in Mexico.
- 9 | National championship opportunities**
Division II features unparalleled opportunity for student-athletes to advance to national championship competition as a result of the division's generous championship access ratios (the best among the three NCAA divisions).
- 10 | National Championships Festivals**
Division II is the only NCAA division that conducts "National Championships Festivals," Olympic-style events in which a number of national championships are held at a single site over several days.
- 11 | Make It Yours**
This student-athlete-driven brand enhancement strengthens awareness among external audiences by clearly communicating the experience Division II schools create for student-athletes.
- 12 | Diversity and inclusion**
Matching grants encourage access, recruitment, selection, and the long-term success of ethnic minorities and women in administration and coaching.

Question *What are your "distinguishing dozen"?*



For more information and resources, visit the "Tools to tell the DII story" link on the Division II homepage at ncaa.org.