



**STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ACADEMICS
FEBRUARY 5-6, 2019, MEETING
PREPARED FOR THE NCAA DIVISION I BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Holistic review of the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program.** The NCAA Division I Committee on Academics continued its holistic review of the APP, informed by the guiding principles of the program. This review was endorsed by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors in August 2018, with the acknowledgement that the APP involves a multitude of elements that speak to student-athlete academic success, especially the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate. The board expressed interest in ensuring that any recommended modifications maintain the validity of the APR as a predictor of graduation.

In October 2018, the committee received an overview of data and policy that inform the current APP and identified the following areas of focus:

- a. APR and Graduate Success Rate cohort composition.
- b. Postgraduate student-athlete in the APR cohort.
- c. Adjustment for retention points lost to professional sports departures.
- d. Delayed graduation points.
- e. Components and calculation of the APR.
- f. Accounting for transfers (and the 2.60 adjustment).
- g. APP penalty structure and filters.
- h. APP public recognition.
- i. Head coaches' APR.

The committee discussed and provided initial feedback on the policy areas reviewed and prepared by the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Data, including APR and GSR cohort composition, postgraduate students and their impact on the APR, professional sports adjustment for the APR retention point and delayed-graduation points. The committee noted that it will not recommend any APR policy modifications until all substantive areas are reviewed. The committee will review additional topical areas at its spring meeting and will forward concepts to the membership for review and feedback.

2. **Commission on College Basketball – implementation of the Division I men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree completion assistance.** The committee reviewed and approved several operational items designed to assist the Division I membership with the implementation of men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree assistance legislation.

Following its October meeting, the committee began collecting operational questions pertaining to the degree completion assistance. The NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Penalties and Appeals served in an advisory role in evaluating the identified operational issues and advancing key issues for deliberation by the full committee. These issues focused on clarifying minimum enrolling requirements for returning former student-athletes, continuing eligibility requirements, including for those former student-athletes changing degree programs, and interaction with existing institutional policies.

Additionally, the committee reviewed and provided feedback on the online application developed for limited-resource institutions to request financial assistance in meeting the new obligation of Division I membership. The committee noted the online application should ensure ease of application for former student-athletes seeking to utilize available resources to complete their undergraduate degree.

Lastly, the committee received an update on the educational and communication strategy designed to ensure former men's and women's basketball student-athletes are aware of the new degree completion assistance. The committee noted the forthcoming Division I basketball tournaments present an ideal opportunity to target communication.

3. **Academic integrity.** The committee received an overview of the concepts recommended by the NCAA Division I Academic Misconduct Working Group to the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum at its January 2019 meeting, designed to fortify the NCAA's approach to academic integrity issues.

The committee supported the clarifying bylaw revisions devised to ensure the current legislative framework is applied consistent with its original intent. The committee noted the recommended clarifications preserve the 2016 legislation's intent to incentivize institutions to operate in good faith when academic integrity issues arise involving student-athletes. To that end, the committee reiterated how NCAA infraction outcomes, specifically the penalties or lack thereof associated with academic misconduct violations, impact institutional confidence in the current legislative framework. The committee noted the working group's phase I recommendations pertaining to applicable infractions policies could encompass how NCAA penalties best reflect the varying nature of academic integrity violations that arise on campus.

The committee supported the broader review of how interpretative issues are identified, managed and resolved throughout the infractions process. The committee noted that an ancillary component to that review might include consideration of how institutional expertise is represented on the NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions hearing panels chosen for cases involving academic integrity issues.

The Committee on Academics similarly supported the recommendation to equip institutions with the tools to devise an institutional approach to adequately minimize the risk of academic misconduct impacting their student-athletes. The committee noted a continued willingness to partner with existing subject-matter experts in devising or endorsing campus-based best practices (i.e., National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals Academic Integrity Assessment).

The committee discussed the recommended values-based academic integrity authority intended for egregious academic actions that are not otherwise addressed by existing NCAA legislation. The committee was generally supportive of equipping the NCAA with a tool to address the rare but egregious, academic behaviors that fall outside the normal purview of the legislation.

Lastly, the Committee on Academics expressed concern regarding the recommendation to authorize the Committee on Infractions review and consideration of institutional policies (or the lack thereof) when evaluating whether conduct constitutes impermissible academic assistance. Specifically, the committee noted such an authorization, without limiting parameters or oversight, may be perceived as overreaching in this aspect of the legislation that often intersects with broad areas of academic freedom.

4. **Comprehensive review of postgraduate student-athletes.** The committee continued its review of the postgraduate academic enrollment options for student-athletes who complete their undergraduate degrees with athletics eligibility remaining. Currently, a student-athlete's academic options are dictated by whether they remain at their undergraduate institution or seek to use any remaining athletics eligibility at a new institution. Specifically, student-athletes who enroll at a new institution after completing a baccalaureate degree are required to pursue a graduate or professional degree program (e.g., master's degree, law school, etc.) whereas student-athletes who remain at their undergraduate institution may pursue any post-baccalaureate or graduate enrollment option available to continuing students (e.g., second baccalaureate degree, optional minor, graduate certificate program, etc.).

Following its October meeting, the committee requested updated data from the membership on the academic trends and outcomes for this growing population of Division I student-athletes. The committee also sought review of initial guiding principles from the Board of Directors, the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and the NCAA Division I Council.

The committee received a preview of the recently collected data on postgraduate student-athletes and considered the feedback from the various governance entities. The committee noted that while other concepts have been proposed to address the postgraduate environment (e.g., Division I Proposal No. 2018-106), it continues to support an academic-based approach that offers all postgraduate student-athletes the flexibility to pursue academic opportunities that best align with their interests, qualifications and future career goals. Specifically, the committee suggests that exploring broader academic options for all postgraduate student-athletes, including those who enroll at a different Division I institution, may have a greater likelihood of improving the academic experiences and outcomes for student-athletes in certain sports.

The committee refined the following guiding principles for additional feedback from the NCAA Division I Board of Directors Administrative Committee.

- a. There should continue to be academic expectations for all postgraduate student-athletes (e.g., pass six hours per term of degree-applicable credit and remain in good academic standing);

- b. All student-athletes should have access to academic educational options that best align with their interests, qualifications and future career, in addition to better preparing student-athletes for transitioning into life after college; and
- c. There should be flexibility in academic paths for all postgraduate student-athletes to pursue after successfully completing an undergraduate degree.

5. **NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program update.** The committee received an update on the academic outcomes for grant recipients of the program. NCAA staff reviewed the types of grants awarded through the program and data pertaining to three classes of grant recipients. Specifically, three institutions were featured as success stories, with highlights of their uses for the grant money, such as updates to academic buildings and computer labs.

The committee reviewed updates on future educational and outreach opportunities. Specifically, staff emphasized the updates to the annual conference, which will include an academic eligibility certification workshop for institutional staff members and student component with the Leadership Enhancement and Academic Development (L.E.A.D.) Academy. The conference will aim to be practitioner-based with student learning. Additionally, the committee received an update on the Historically Black Colleges and Universities initiative and the development of the AASP best practices booklet, which is available on ncaa.org.

6. **Academic summit.** The committee received an update from the working group on its progress in planning an academic summit focused on current and future issues facing higher education. An objective of the summit is to establish and foster a collaborative partnership with external organizations dedicated to higher education that may help the committee and the NCAA identify and discuss trends and issues in higher education impacting the general student body and student-athletes. These discussions may impact future strategic initiatives for the committee and the Association. The committee noted such programming would be valuable for campus provosts, noting college presidents and chancellors most commonly transition directly from the provost position. The summit is slated for early 2020.

For additional detail, the committee's full report may be accessed on ncaa.org by clicking [here](#).