



**STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ACADEMICS
FEBRUARY 6-7, 2023, MEETING
FOR THE NCAA DIVISION I BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

KEY ITEMS.

- 1. Final report and recommendations from the comprehensive review of the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program and return to normal APP operations.** The NCAA Division I Committee on Academics received the final report and approved the recommendations from the ad hoc group charged with conducting a comprehensive review of the APP. While elements of the APP were paused as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee on Academics took advantage of the time to gather a wide breadth of perspectives on the academic program and reviewed several identified topics before the resumption of normal APP operations scheduled for fall 2023. Since summer 2022, the ad hoc group conducted 12 videoconferences, which included a review of relevant data and heard from important stakeholder groups to help answer the essential question, which is: Is the APP, in its entirety, facilitating academic success and addressing academic underperformance while considering the changing landscape of intercollegiate athletics? Based on the final report from the ad hoc group, the Committee on Academics agreed the APP, in its entirety, has positively enhanced the academic success of student-athletes dramatically and has been successful in addressing academic underperformance. Specifically, the Committee on Academics confirmed the value of the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate formula of eligibility and retention in predicting graduation and agreed the current penalty and postseason access model is effective in addressing academic underperformance. The Committee on Academics also directed the staff to provide enhanced education to institutions with teams below the 930 penalty and postseason access benchmark, even if a filter was used to avoid penalties and loss of access to postseason competition.

The Committee on Academics also finalized the details of the return to normal APP operations after portions of the program were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The restart will include a four-year average of APR data from 2019-20 through 2022-23. The minimum score for each team to avoid penalties and to be eligible for postseason competition remains 930. The return to normal operations will include the public recognition of high-performing teams. This means program penalties and the possible loss of access to postseason competition will resume based on the four-year-cohort scores released in spring 2024. Teams that score below the benchmark will face penalties that encourage an increased emphasis on academics. Penalties and the loss of access to postseason competition will be announced in spring 2024, and both will be imposed in 2024-25.

- 2. Update from the NCAA Division I Transformation Committee and feedback on referrals to the Committee on Academics.** The Committee on Academics received an update on the work of the Transformation Committee and its final report and subsequent implementation. At this time, the Transformation Committee has referred its final recommendations to the appropriate committees for review and feedback and ultimate implementation, if appropriate. At the request of the NCAA Division I Board of Directors, the Committee on Academics reviewed and provided its feedback on three concepts.

- a. Membership Expectations – Academic Support. The Board of Directors referred to the Committee on Academics consideration of an APR score that could be used as a benchmark for meeting membership expectations in the area of academic support. The Committee on Academics did not support implementing a new APR score at this time and is committed to re-visiting this in the future when the athletic landscape has stabilized due to the impact of NIL, transfers and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee on Academics did support the examination of a minimum APR membership requirement for schools transitioning to Division I. Such a requirement would reinforce the importance of academics to schools aspiring to join Division I.
- b. Transfer Graduation Metric. The Board of Directors referred to the Committee on Academics consideration of a legislative concept that would require schools to satisfy a separate graduation metric for the school's cohort of transfer students, which if not met will impact an institution's revenue distribution and/or preclude an institution from adding transfer student-athletes to its roster for a specified period of time. The Committee on Academics did not support the concept and noted the current APR metric accounts for transfer activity and movement. The Committee on Academics noted the current APR penalty structure provides the appropriate guardrails and institutional accountability for the academic success of its transfers.
- c. Progress-toward-degree requirements for transfers. The Board of Directors referred to the Committee on Academics a review of the current progress-toward-degree requirements for transfers to determine whether student-athletes should be required to meet percentage-of-degree requirements at their previous institution in order to be immediately eligible upon transfer. The Committee on Academics supported this concept and will request the NCAA Division I Council to introduce a legislative proposal into the next cycle. [See Legislative Action Item No. 1-a.]

Also, the Committee on Academics strongly expressed its support for maintaining its current reporting line to the Board of Directors rather than the proposed shift in the new governance structure. The Committee on Academics would report to the Oversight Committee in the new structure. The Committee on Academics believes it is important for it to continue to the report to the Board of Directors, for this would continue to emphasize the primacy of academics.

3. **Impact of name, image and likeness activity on the academic performance of Division I student-athletes.** The Committee on Academics received an update on recent name, image and likeness activity. There has been an increase in attention given to the types of opportunities being provided to student-athletes in this space. The Committee on Academics continues to be interested in examining the academic impact, if any, these types of opportunities have on student-athletes moving forward.

4. **Update on Division I four-year college transfer activity.** The Committee on Academics received an update on current transfer trends based on data from the NCAA Transfer Portal. There was an increase in the number of student-athletes entering the Transfer Portal, with the percentage of graduate transfers significantly increasing in almost every sport. The Committee on Academics will continue to receive regular updates on four-year college transfer trends and waiver requests for the year in residence for four-year college transfer student-athletes, for the Committee on Academics was charged with monitoring this activity.

5. **Legislative request to amend NCAA Division I Bylaw 14.5.5.2.10 Four-Year College Transfers – Exceptions for Transfers from Four-Year Colleges – One-Time Transfer Exception – Fulfillment of Percentage-of-Degree Requirements at the Previous Institution.** The Committee on Academics recommended the Council introduce a proposal into the 2023-24 legislative cycle to require a student-athlete to meet all eligibility requirements, including percentage-of-degree requirements, at the previous institution at the time of transfer in order to be eligible to use the one-time transfer. This was a referral from the Board of Directors. Student-athletes making meaningful progress toward graduation is one of the goals of NCAA progress-toward-degree requirements. All student-athletes should be making such progress, regardless of their intent to transfer. Requiring student-athletes to meet all progress-toward-degree requirements, including percentage-of-degree benchmarks, will help to ensure that student-athletes continue to focus on academics after they have decided to transfer. Also, when a student-athlete leaves an institution meeting all progress-toward-degree requirements except the percentage-of-degree benchmark, the institution they are leaving loses the APR eligibility point and the APR retention point because they are not leaving the institution eligible. This has an adverse effect on the leaving institution while the student-athlete is currently permitted to use the one-time transfer exception and compete during the first year at the new institution. Requiring completion of the percentage-of-degree benchmark would eliminate this inconsistency.

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