



**STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ACADEMICS
MAY 13-14, 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 NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program, 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 valid 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 Graduation Success Rate cohort composition.
- b. Postgraduate student-athletes in the APR cohort.
- c. Adjustment for APR retention points lost to professional sports departures.
- d. Delayed graduation points.
- e. Components and calculation of the APR.
- f. Accounting for transfers (and the 2.600 adjustment).
- g. APP penalty structure and filters.
- h. APP public recognition.
- i. Head coaches' APR.
- j. Other topics identified by the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Data.

The committee determined that the Subcommittee on Data would vet and prepare each policy area for full committee discussion. During its February meeting, the committee initially reviewed policies impacting APR and GSR cohort composition, postgraduate student-athlete cohort inclusion, professional sport adjustment, and delayed graduation points. The committee noted that it will not recommend any APR policy modifications until all substantive areas are reviewed.

Following the February meeting, the Subcommittee on Data reviewed six additional policy items, including head coaches' APR, the APR calculation, the APR transfer adjustment, the APR public recognition, inclusion of non-counters in the APR and APR penalty structure and penalties. In each case, the NCAA research staff provided and reviewed relevant data to aid the subcommittee's assessment of each policy.

The committee discussed and provided feedback on the six additional policy areas reviewed by the Subcommittee on Data. The committee will review additional topical areas on its June teleconference and will forward concepts to the membership for review and feedback during fall 2019.

- 2. Academic integrity.** The committee discussed the academic integrity concepts forwarded for feedback by the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum. The committee supports the Presidential Forum's goal of fortifying the division's approach to academic integrity issues that undermine the overall integrity of intercollegiate athletics.

The committee remained largely supportive of a legislative concept that would ensure the NCAA had the legislative tools to address systemic, egregious instances of academic malfeasance. The committee noted the presidential "guardrail" concept would likely confine the use of such authority to the proper set of circumstances. The committee noted any nomenclature adjustment should not undermine how existing academic integrity violations are treated.

The committee continued to support the clarifying legislative 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.

The committee 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. Following the February meeting, the committee refined an academic standards of review resource designed to complement this particular concept and direct institutions to common areas that benefit from monitoring and oversight.

The committee will review its final feedback to the Presidential Forum on its June teleconference.

- 3. Academic enrollment options for postgraduate student-athletes.** The committee continued its review of the academic enrollment requirements for postgraduate student-athletes, with recent feedback from National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A) academic practitioners. The committee identified two concepts for broader membership feedback that align with its guiding principles and provide postgraduate student-athletes with access to a broader array of academic options.

In February 2019, the committee reviewed updated data on the academic trends and outcomes of the growing number of postgraduate student-athletes on Division I campuses and considered feedback from other governance entities. The committee noted that while other concepts have been proposed to address the postgraduate environment (e.g., NCAA Division I Proposal No. 2018-106), it continued 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 suggested 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 acknowledged that while competitive equity concerns exist in the postgraduate environment, limiting academic options for postgraduate student-athletes will not change postgraduate transfer decisions, as evidenced by the growing number of this population of Division I student-athletes.

The committee returned to its guiding principles, which were endorsed by the Board of Directors in February.

- 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.

The committee discussed input received from athletics administrators with academic oversight who work with a sizeable portion of postgraduate student-athletes on their respective campuses. The feedback collected supports the committee's efforts to create access to a broader array of academic options for all postgraduate student-athletes and aligns with the guiding principles identified by the committee. The committee recommended two concepts, one that provides greater flexibility at the graduate-level and one that aligns with the concept recommended by the Sun Belt Conference, for additional membership feedback.

Commission on College Basketball – implementation of the Division I men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree completion assistance. The committee received an update on implementation of the men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree assistance legislation. The committee noted the online application for the Former Student-Athlete Degree Achievement Program became available on April 1. The application was developed for limited-resource institutions to request financial assistance in meeting the new obligation of Division I membership. Additionally, the committee received an update on the comprehensive toolkit developed to assist the entire division with program creation and implementation available on naaa.org.

In April 2018, the Commission on College Basketball recommended the NCAA establish a fund to pay for the degree completion of student-athletes with athletics scholarships who leave member institutions after at least two years of enrollment. The commission stated that colleges and universities must fulfill their commitment to student-athletes to provide not only the opportunity for athletics competition, but also an education. Institutions must promise student-athletes that the option to receive an education will exist, even after their athletics careers are finished. In August 2018, the Board of Directors approved a student support and degree completion fund as a condition of Division I membership. Following its adoption, the committee was charged with operationalization of the new legislation, which becomes effective August 1, 2019.

4. **Academic-Athletics Summit.** The committee received an update from the working group on its progress in planning an academic summit focused on issues facing higher education. The inaugural Academic-Athletics Summit will be held in conjunction with the 2020 NCAA Convention in Anaheim, California. The summit will provide an opportunity for the academics and athletics leadership triad of president or chancellor, provost and athletics director to engage in a discussion on topics that are impacting both branches of higher education, including the opportunity to:
 - a. Engage in a conversation about identifying predictive retention metrics and measures of academic success in higher education that impact both the general student body and student-athletes;
 - b. Explore modes of student body and student-athlete engagement and deep learning beyond the classroom walls through high-impact practices and discuss how to assess such value-added college experiences;
 - c. Further expose higher education leaders to the dynamics of athletics and the NCAA as an education partner; and
 - d. Foster collaboration across the higher education community to establish practical goals.

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