



**STRATEGIC REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ACADEMICS
OCTOBER 8-9, 2019, MEETING
PREPARED FOR THE NCAA DIVISION I BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Holistic review of the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program.** [Academics] [Fairness] 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 illustrates 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 informs the current APP and identified the following areas of focus:

- a. APR and Graduation Success Rate cohort composition.
- b. Inclusion of 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.

The committee determined that the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Data would vet and prepare each policy area for full committee discussion. During its February and May meetings the committee reviewed policies and data from each area noted above. In each case, the NCAA research staff provided and reviewed relevant data to aid the subcommittee's assessment of each policy.

The committee reviewed a comprehensive presentation with relevant data that will be used to solicit feedback from the membership. The committee provided feedback to staff related to content of the presentation to enhance understanding of the causal connection between each area and to highlight impact of any potential changes to the metric. The committee approved three membership webinars along with various outreach efforts to stakeholders. In addition, the committee approved the opportunity to solicit feedback from various standing committees in the Division I governance structure. The committee will receive an update at its February meeting, and it is anticipated the committee will make final decisions on any policy changes during its May meeting.

2. **Academic enrollment requirements for postgraduate student-athletes.** [Academics] [Well-Being] [Fairness] The committee continued its review of the academic enrollment requirements for student-athletes who earn their undergraduate degree with athletics eligibility remaining. The current legislation draws a distinction between student-athletes who enroll at a different institution after completing a baccalaureate degree (e.g., master's degree, professional degree) compared to those available to student-athletes who remain at their undergraduate institution (e.g., second baccalaureate/major, minor, graduate certificate program). As a result, a student-athlete's postgraduate academic pursuit is largely determined by whether the student-athlete earned a baccalaureate degree from the institution versus what necessarily best aligns with the student-athlete's academic interests or qualifications. Furthermore, the legislative distinction may not have evolved with the postgraduate academic offerings that now exist on many Division I campuses, like graduate certificate programs. The committee noted that while some student-athletes are prepared for and interested in immediately pursuing graduate school, many others may benefit more from other educational opportunities.

The following guiding principles were approved by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors Administrative Committee for this review:

1. 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);
2. 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
3. There should be flexibility in academic paths for all postgraduate student-athletes to pursue after successfully completing an undergraduate degree.

Based on these guiding principles, the committee confirmed that there should continue to be academic expectations for all postgraduate student-athletes and access to additional educational opportunities should be explored. While graduate school may continue to be the best fit for some students, all student-athletes should have access to educational options that best align with their interests, qualifications and future career aspirations.

At this meeting, 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 the feedback from other governance entities. The committee noted that while other concepts have been proposed to address the postgraduate environment, 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 likely will not change postgraduate transfer decisions.

The committee reviewed feedback from a membership survey on three postgraduate academic enrollment concepts. Member conferences and academic stakeholders provided feedback on the following concepts:

Concept No. 1 – Maintain the current legislation.

Concept No. 2 – Expanded access to graduate-level options at the new institution.

Concept No. 3 – Uniform academic options for graduate and undergraduate student-athletes.

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 will request the NCAA Division I Council introduce Concepts Nos. 2 and 3 noted above into the 2019-20 legislative cycle, which will allow for broader membership feedback.

- 3. College Basketball Reform – implementation of the Division I men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree completion assistance.** [Academics] [Well-Being] [Fairness] The committee received an update on implementation of the men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree completion assistance legislation. The committee noted the low number of applications received to date and discussed continued efforts to educate the membership on the availability of the degree completion program. An 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 ncaa.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. 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 operationalizing and implementing the new legislation, which became effective August 1, 2019.

- 4. Academic-Athletics Summit.** [Academics] [Well-Being] 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 general student 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.
- 5. Review of academic integrity legislation and policies.** [Academics] [Fairness] The committee received a final report on the actions taken by the Board of Directors on the recommendations from the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum on its review of academic integrity and misconduct legislation, policy and interpretations. The Board of Directors supported the standards of review and suggested approaches as recommended by the Committee on Academics that an institution may consider as part of its efforts to help prevent and identify potential academic misconduct. The standards of review and the complementary National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals supplement will be distributed to the membership via NCAA.org, mass email to academic stakeholders and incorporation into the committee's policies and procedures.
- 6. NCAA Division I four-year college transfer landscape.** [Academics] [Fairness] The committee discussed the current four-year college transfer environment in relation to waivers for immediate eligibility and the possibility of conference-introduced legislative proposals for the 2019-20 cycle. Specifically, the committee noted two conference-submitted legislative concepts related to immediate eligibility at the next four-year institution: one to eliminate the one-time transfer exception for undergraduate and graduate students and one to specify that the one-time transfer exception shall apply to all sports. The committee supported a moratorium on transfer legislative concepts, noting the additional time would permit analysis of additional data points and the development of a concept that may include an academic model for immediate eligibility. Such a model may be similar to the concept the committee forwarded to the most recent NCAA Division I Transfer Working Group, which was based upon academic benchmarks, such as having a certain grade-point average and minimum number of credits transferring to next institution. The committee was advised that, in October, the Board of Directors will address the concepts as well as broader issues related to the four-year college transfer waiver environment.

*Note: The associated NCAA core values are noted with each agenda item (academics, fairness, well-being, organizational).

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