



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ACADEMICS
OCTOBER 21, 2020, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

KEY ITEMS.

- 1. Suspension of NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for the 2020-21 data collection.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics is requesting the NCAA Division I Board of Directors suspend APP penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for the 2020-21 data collection. [Nonlegislative Action Item]
- 2. Use of standardized tests in NCAA initial-eligibility requirements.** The committee received an update on the formation of a task force charged with this review. The objective is to have a recommendation on the use of standardized tests as part of NCAA initial-eligibility requirements in early 2021 for the next legislative cycle. [Informational Item No. 1]
- 3. Preview of Graduation Success Rate data.** The committee previewed the GSR data for student-athletes who initially enrolled full time at a collegiate institution in 2013. The data will be released to the public on November 17. [Informational Item No. 2]

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Suspension of APP penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for the 2020-21 NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate data collection and APP operational updates for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 data collection.**

(1) Recommendation. The Committee on Academics recommends the Board of Directors suspend APP penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for the 2020-21 APR data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic and approve the following APP process updates due to the suspension for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 data collections:

- (a) No public release of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 APR data.
- (b) No Top Ten public recognition in spring 2021 or spring 2022.
- (c) Maintain APR improvement plan requirements.
- (d) Continue data reviews.

(2) Effective date. Fall 2021 (i.e., for APR data submitted fall 2021 from the 2020-21 academic year).

(3) Rationale. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020 has created uncertainty in higher education and intercollegiate athletics. This includes the way colleges and universities may deliver courses and educational programming for the 2020-21 academic year, the possibility of student-athletes not returning or not returning full time and changes to sport seasons. In addition, the NCAA has responded to membership concerns with blanket waivers and other accommodations that may impact earning eligibility and retention points in spring 2020, including suspending APR penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for 2019-20 academic year. Suspending the APR penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for an additional year may offer some relief to institutions concerned about the challenging environment created by COVID-19. The suspension will also allow institutions to focus on other issues facing college athletics at this time.

Institutions will still be required to submit APR data from the 2020-21 academic year. The normal verification, correction and adjustment processes will also continue. The collection of the data will allow for continued analysis of academic trends and continued data driven decision-making. Also, during this time, the committee will conduct a comprehensive review of the metric and its impact on teams, especially Historically Black Colleges and Universities, limited-resource institutions and other schools and student-athletes that may face unique or difficult challenges during the pandemic. [Note: The recommendation for suspension of APP penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for the submission of 2019-20 APR data is included in the committee's September 2020 videoconference report.]

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Teams falling below the penalty benchmarks will be able to access postseason competition and have no restrictions on in-season and out-of-season hourly limitations.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Use of standardized tests in NCAA initial-eligibility requirements.** During its July 2020 meeting, the committee approved several recommendations for enhanced flexibility in the application of initial-eligibility standards due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NCAA initial-eligibility requirements will not require students initially enrolling in the 2020-21 or 2021-22 academic years to have a standardized test score. This action was a direct result of the impact of COVID-19 on the administration of both SAT and ACT tests in spring 2019 and in the current academic year.

The committee acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on test administration and noted the trend of institutions moving to a test-optional admissions process. Given this new

environment, the committee is supportive of a comprehensive review of the use of standardized tests as part of NCAA initial-eligibility requirements. A task force will be charged with this review and will include representatives from Division II and subject-matter experts. It is anticipated that recommendations will be presented to the committee in early spring 2020.

2. **Graduation Success Rate data for the 2013 entering cohort.** The committee previewed the GSR data for student-athletes who initially enrolled full time at a collegiate institution in 2013. This year's GSR reached 90%, which is the highest rate ever and represents a one-percentage point increase over the rate for students who entered college in 2012. A four-percentage point increase in men's basketball players earning a degree boosted the rate, including a six-percentage point jump in the last year for Black men's basketball student-athletes. The GSR for women's basketball increased two points, with the rate among Black women's basketball players rising three points. Over the past 19 years, 33,505 more college athletes graduated than would have had the GSR remained at 74%, the GSR the year it was introduced. The data will be released to the public on November 17.
3. **Less-than-full-time waiver requests for practice and competition for fall sport student-athletes who graduate after fall 2020 term.** The committee approved a blanket waiver of full-time enrollment requirements for practice and competition to permit a fall sport student-athlete who earns a baccalaureate degree at the end of the 2020 fall term to practice and compete while enrolled part time during winter 2021 and/or spring term(s) in which their season is ultimately conducted, provided the following criteria are met:
 - (a) The student-athlete is enrolled in a minimum of six hours of academic credit;
 - (b) Relief is limited to the 2020-21 academic year;
 - (c) Student-athletes who utilize this blanket waiver must successfully complete a minimum of six hours of academic credit in order to return to use an additional season of competition during the 2021-22 academic year consistent with NCAA Division I Bylaw 14.4.3.6-(d);
 - (d) Student-athletes who utilize this blanket waiver and ultimately return to use an additional season of competition during the 2021-22 academic year shall be required to meet full-time enrollment requirements for postgraduate student-athletes, consistent with Bylaw 14.6.1; and
 - (e) Institutions are required to report use of the blanket waiver to conference offices to inform future review and policy discussions of similar requests and/or application areas.
4. **Less-than-full-time waiver requests for practice and competition for institutions operating on a nontraditional academic calendar.** The committee adopted a temporary waiver directive to permit the staff to approve waivers of the full-time enrollment legislation for practice and competition for any institution that revised its academic calendar to include an additional full-time term (i.e., three semesters or four quarters) during the regular academic

year and does not permit students to enroll full time for all terms. The committee determined that relief is appropriate when alternative academic calendars and institutional policies prevent student-athletes from being enrolled as full-time students. The committee determined there should not be a minimum number of credits required during the non-full-time term provided the student-athlete is enrolled full time during the other terms of the academic year.

5. **Update on the Division I men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree completion assistance.** The committee received an update on the implementation of the Division I men's and women's basketball student-athlete degree completion assistance program for former basketball scholarship student-athletes who left their Division I institutions having completed at least two years of enrollment. There are currently six applicants for the 2020-21 academic year. In addition, the committee received an update on the educational initiatives completed and planned for the current academic year to inform the membership of the degree completion opportunities offered by the NCAA.
6. **Update on the Division I Wrestling Academic Enhancement Working Group.** The committee received the final report from the working group, which completed its work this past fall. This working group was established at the request of the National Wrestling Coaches Association to discuss recommendations to improve the academic performance of wrestling student-athletes. The working group finalized recommendations in the areas of progress-toward-degree, financial aid, outside competition and competition during the institution's playing and practice season. Due to the current moratorium on legislative proposals, the committee will revisit these recommendations at a future meeting.
7. **NCAA educational initiatives to assist HBCUs/LRIs.** The committee received an update on the educational outreach efforts and initiatives for LRIs and HBCUs. Numerous educational efforts have occurred over the last three years. These efforts include collaboration with the NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program, which included educational sessions on continuing eligibility requirements, and workshop sessions for institutions to review their own policies and procedures. Additional educational outreach included the roll-out of the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Plan Conference Contact Program. The program assigns each conference a staff member to serve as a resource for any questions related to the APP and the APR data collection. This initiative allows for customized educational outreach based on the needs of each institution and conference.
8. **Review of the APR adjustment directive.** The committee reviewed and approved the APR adjustment directive, with modifications to assist the membership in its understanding of the directive. [See subcommittee discussion at Information Item Nos. 9-b, 9-c and 9-e.]
9. **Report from the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Data.** The committee reviewed the reports of the Subcommittee on Data teleconferences that occurred between June 8 and October 12.
 - a. Annual approval of the APR adjustment directive. On its June 8 teleconference, the subcommittee approved the APR adjustment directive.

- b. Updates to the APR adjustment directive. On its June 22 teleconference, the subcommittee approved modifications to the directive for the professional athletic adjustment and the transfer adjustment.
- c. Review of adjustment requests that cite mental health as mitigation. On its August 3 teleconference, the subcommittee updated its APR adjustment directive to include language to address mental health issues and provided guidance regarding documentation standards specific to COVID-19 adjustment requests.
- d. Suspension of APP penalties and loss of postseason competition in 2020-21. On its September 10 teleconference, the subcommittee finalized a recommendation to suspend APP penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for 2020-21 based on the submission of 2019-20 APR data.
- e. Review of adjustment directive for spring 2020 retention points lost by international student-athletes not returning to the United States due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On its October 5 teleconference, the subcommittee amended the adjustment directive to require requests for international student-athletes not returning to the United States due to the COVID-19 pandemic to include a student-athlete statement citing the mitigation and supporting documentation from the institution.

10. Report from the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Student-Athlete Academics. The committee reviewed the reports of the Subcommittee on Student-Athlete Academics teleconferences that occurred between August 19 to October 14.

- a. Missed class time for practice activities. On its August 19 teleconference, the subcommittee determined that student-athletes may practice during class time if it is clearly stated within the course materials that the posted class times are purely administrative and there are no live lectures or presentations during that time. The subcommittee also determined that if there is an expectation that all class members be logged in and participating during class time, student-athletes may not practice during that time, even if the lectures or presentations are recorded and posted for those students who were not able to attend the class time.
- b. Use of previously approved waivers on more than one occasion. On its August 19 teleconference, the subcommittee agreed that the policy of only being able to self-apply a waiver based on the Progress-Toward-Degree Waiver Checklist once should not be modified during this academic year.
- c. Review of progress-toward-degree waivers requesting relief from the nine-hour rule in football. On its September 30 teleconference, the subcommittee reviewed the application of the waiver directive regarding the additional football requirements in relation to the current COVID-19 pandemic and determined the application should continue. However, the subcommittee determined some relief should be provided to those student-athlete who have waivers denied based on the unique scheduling issues of the 2020 football season. The subcommittee instructed the staff to provide partial

relief in these waiver cases to require a withholding of 33% of the institution's contests, rounded up (e.g., a three-game withholding for an eight-contest season).

11. Report from the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Penalties and Appeals. The committee reviewed the October 1 report of the Subcommittee on Penalties and Appeals.

- a. Review of APP penalties taken during the 2019-20 academic year. The subcommittee received an update on the teams that have taken penalties during the 2019-20 academic year. It was noted that all teams have taken their respective penalties.
- b. Preview of APP penalties and loss of access to postseason competition for 2020-21. The subcommittee received an early preview of the teams that may potentially be subject to penalties and/or loss of access to postseason competition based on the submission of APR data from the 2019-20 academic year.
- c. Update on legislative relief waiver requests for student-athletes who transferred due to loss of access to postseason competition. The subcommittee received an update on the number of waiver requests received by the staff for student-athletes who transferred due to their teams' loss of access to postseason competition.

12. NCAA Division I Working Group on Transfers. The committee received an update from the Working Group on Transfers regarding its comprehensive uniform transfer eligibility legislative proposal.

13. Review of the AASP. The committee received an update on the AASP, including a funding update and an on-going comprehensive review of the program.

14. Board of Directors report. The committee received reports from the board's August 5 and August 21 videoconferences.

15. NCAA Division I Council report. The committee received a report from the Council's September 16 and October 13-14 videoconferences.

16. NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee report. The committee received a report from SAAC's August 18 videoconference.

17. Report of the Committee on Academics' September videoconference. The committee reviewed the report from its September 17 videoconference.

18. Future meeting dates.

- a. February 18, 2021, videoconference; and
- b. May 11-12, videoconference.

Committee Chair: John DeGioia, Georgetown University

Staff Liaisons: Shauna Cobb, Academic and Membership Affairs

Jennifer Henderson, Academic and Membership Affairs

Binh T. Nguyen, Academic and Membership Affairs

NCAA Division I Committee on Academics October 21, 2020, Videoconference
Attendees:
Jacqueline Blackett, Columbia University – Barnard College.
Brynn Carlson, Kansas State University.
Manoj Chopra, University of Central Florida.
Eileen Daley, San Jose State University.
John E. Davidson, The Ohio State University.
John DeGioia, Georgetown University.
Pat Elliott, Binghamton University
K. Renia Edwards, Mississippi Valley State University.
Ursula Gurney, University of Missouri-Kansas City.
Eric Hall, Elon University.
Jennifer Heppel, Patriot League.
Jessica Kumke, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee.
Marion McClary, Fairleigh Dickinson University.
Kim Record, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
Joe Scogin, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
Lynn W. Thompson, Bethune-Cookman University.
Ted White, University of Virginia.
Pamela Whitten, Kennesaw State University.
Guests in Attendance:
None.
Absentees:
Dianne Harrison, California State University, Northridge.
Karen Paisley, University of Utah.
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:
Shauna Cobb, Jennifer Henderson and Binh Nguyen.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Lydia Bell, Eric Brey, Marcus Brown, Emily Capehart, Greg Dana, Judy Delp, Meghan Durham, Jennifer Fraser, Kelsey Gurganus, Brandy Hataway, Leilani Hubbard, Jess Kerr, Felicia Martin, Tom Paskus, Todd Petr, Dave Schnase, Kathy Sulentic, Zack Teats, Carrie Leger White, DeAnna Wiley, Quintin Wright and Katy Yurk.