



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
APRIL 24, 2025, IN-PERSON MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Election of New NCAA Division II Championships Committee and NCAA Mental Health Advisory Group Representatives.** The NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee elected Sean Belzer (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference) as the committee's second NCAA Division II Championships Committee representative joining Haley White (Lincoln Memorial University, At-Large Representative).

The committee also elected Zeke Jarzyniecki (Belmont Abbey College, Conference Carolinas) as the committee's second NCAA Mental Health Advisory Group representative joining Grace Hoepfner (Michigan Technological University, Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference).

Mr. Belzer and Mr. Jarzyniecki fill the positions that were previously held by JJ Hayes (Palm Beach Atlantic University, Sunshine State Conference) who will step away from SAAC following the committee's April meeting.

2. **Discussion with NCAA President Charlie Baker.** The committee met with President Charlie Baker to discuss updates on topics related to the preliminary approved House settlement, congressional engagement, NCAA fan database, Division II Eligibility Review Working Group and sports wagering on professional sports.
3. **Discussion on Division II Football Date Formula Student-Athlete Survey Results.** The committee discussed the results of the Division II Football Date Formula Student-Athlete Survey. The committee then discussed whether it would recommend a date formula change that would move the football national championship game from the third weekend in December to the first weekend in January.

The committee unanimously supported the status quo (i.e., retaining the Week Zero legislation and keeping the championship game in December). The committee acknowledged the overwhelming importance Division II football student-athletes expressed in the survey on having the championship game remain on a linear network. The committee also acknowledged the 51% of football student-athletes who completed the survey supporting the status quo compared to the 26% who supported keeping Week Zero and adding a Week 12 to the regular season if the championship game was moved to January.

The committee expressed concerns over the date formula change impacting the division's Life in the Balance philosophy, the limited time football student-athletes would have to see family and friends over the holiday break if the championship game was moved to January and the limited time impacting student-athlete mental health, having an extended break between the semifinals and the championship game and needing to ramp back up following the time off, and the uncertainty of the championship game being broadcast on a linear network if it was played in January.

4. **Discussion on a Division II Student-Athlete Resource for NIL Assist.** The committee received an overview of [NCAA NIL Assist](#) that launched in partnership with Teamworks to all NCAA student-athletes in August 2024. NIL Assist is a free platform that connects student-athletes with potential service providers, facilitates disclosures of NIL activities and provides insight into evolving trends within the NIL environment.

The committee learned of two resources available to student-athletes – one resource created by the Division I SAAC and a second resource created by the Division II academic and membership affairs team that outlines the purpose of NIL Assist and the information available on the website. The committee expressed support for creating a resource specifically for Division II student-athletes but ultimately felt that the academic and membership affairs resource provides student-athletes with the necessary information and a separate resource does not need to be created at this time.

5. **Discussion on Joint Celebration of 2025 Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award Recipient and 20 Years of Division II Faculty Athletics Representative Institutes at the 2026 NCAA Convention.** The committee supported an idea to host a joint reception for the 2025 Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award recipient and a celebration for 20 years of the Division II Faculty Athletics Representative Institutes at the 2026 NCAA Convention.
6. **Discussion on Division II Award of Excellence Selections Process.** The committee reviewed and discussed the selections process for the Division II Award of Excellence, which is an honor that recognizes schools and conferences for their best community engagement activity or event that promotes student-athletes giving back and serving as leaders within their communities. Previously SAAC's Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee reviewed the finalists from each conference and those chosen as at-large honorees. The committee provided feedback in support of a new selections process that involves the Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee earlier in the process. The committee is in favor of the subcommittee reviewing all the nominations that are received and scoring them with a selection committee composed of administrators. The Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee would still choose the overall winner, runner-up and third-place finalist. This updated selections process would permit the Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee to participate in the discussions with the initial selection committee, and it would move up the selections timeline, which has been near final exams for the fall semester.

7. **Updates on 2024-25 SAAC Goals.** The committee discussed its progress toward the three E's – empowering student-athletes with resources, empathizing with their concerns and enhancing the student-athlete voice and experience – through the work of the following committee teams:
 - a. **Congressional Engagement.** The congressional engagement team appointed Mr. Jarzyniecki to lead the team. The team has social media posts planned to help promote the importance of congressional engagement and is reviewing the templated letters created for student-athletes to send to members of Congress to determine if any updates are needed. The team has been meeting monthly with members from Division I and III SAACs and Austin Meo from the NCAA office of government relations to receive updates and provide feedback on the office of government relations' strategies. The team would like to support the office of government relations' goal to have each conference SAAC write a letter to members of Congress.
 - b. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging.** The diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging team appointed Rachel McCool to lead the team. The team is looking to recognize upcoming awareness months on social media, such as Pride Month. It is interested in learning what institutions are doing on campus in particular areas and are considering asking the committee to forward a form to their SAAC Network.
 - c. **Life After the Game.** The life after the game team appointed Mariah Hughes to lead the team. The team is interested in conducting interviews and using some of the responses in quote graphics to post on social media.
 - d. **Mental Health.** The mental health team appointed Mr. Belzer to lead the team. The team discussed creating a calendar before the academic year begins this fall for when it will meet, post and distribute educational resources.
8. **Update on Work of Cross-Divisional Group of SAAC Members.** The committee received an update on the development of the cross-divisional group of NCAA SAAC members that will facilitate dialogue within the student-athlete community and provide the NCAA Board of Governors with student-athlete input on Association-wide policies and issues that impact student-athletes. The cross-divisional group will be composed of the three graduated student-athletes serving on the Board of Governors from Division I, II and III SAACs and the members of the executive teams/boards of the divisional SAACs. Division II's representatives will include its new Board of Governors graduated student-athlete who will be recommended in July and SAAC's executive team of chair Avery Hellmuth, vice chair Scout Huffman, external communications coordinator Addison Courtney and internal operations coordinator Dustyn McKenney.

When Divisions I, II and III SAACs meet in July, they will each take action on a recommendation to add information regarding the cross-divisional group of SAAC members to their policies and procedures. If supported by the divisional SAACs, implementation of this group will begin in August 2025 with feedback provided to the Board of Governors in October 2025 and thereafter.

9. **Update on Division II Eligibility Review Working Group.** The committee received an update on the progress of the NCAA Division II Eligibility Review Working Group and the comprehensive eligibility review. The group is composed of 25 members and includes all members of the Division II Academic Requirements Committee and Legislation Committee as well as the chairs of the Division II SAAC, Management Council and Executive Board who serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members.

The Eligibility Review Working Group has met three times. In its last meeting, the group drafted concepts for membership feedback in April and May. The committee was updated on the ongoing survey being taken by key stakeholders at institutions and conferences. The feedback from the survey will be reviewed by the working group at its May videoconference. The working group will then decide to submit legislative recommendations to the Management Council to consider sponsoring for a membership vote at the 2026 Convention.

The committee reviewed the concepts developed by the Eligibility Review Working Group, asked questions and shared initial feedback.

10. **Update on Membership Survey Results for 2026-32 NCAA Division II Operating Plan.** The committee reviewed results of the 2025 Division II Membership Survey. The committee was surprised by the lack of support from administrators for the Division II National Championships Festival. The committee members who attended the winter festival in Indianapolis expressed support for it enhancing the student-athlete experience based on their involvement and the feedback they received from peers who competed.
11. **Sports Wagering Update.** The committee received an update on sports wagering and concepts related to the deregulation of sports wagering on professional sports. The Management Council will continue to discuss this topic at upcoming meetings with possible action in July. The committee provided perspectives on the addicting nature of sports wagering and the educational resources that would need to be developed if the legislation is changed.
12. **Updates to Division II Civic Engagement Day Resource.** The committee learned that updates need to be made to the Division II Civic Engagement Day resource following the adoption of NCAA Division II Proposal No. 2025-7 at the 2025 Convention.

13. **SAAC Super Region Convention Preview.** The committee prepared for the April 25-27 SAAC Super Region Convention for schools in the Central and Midwest regions at the Hyatt Regency in Indianapolis. The committee will lead several discussions and assist national office staff with logistics at the super region convention.
14. **Process for SAAC Recommending New Division II Former Student-Athlete Representative on Board of Governors.** The committee reviewed the process for SAAC to recommend a new Division II former student-athlete representative on the Board of Governors with Madeleine McKenna's term ending in August. The committee will solicit nominations following the April meeting and hold an election to recommend a new former student-athlete to the board at its July meeting.
15. **Make-A-Wish® Update.** The committee was reminded of the deadlines for donations to count toward a school's 2024-25 fundraising total. Mail-in donations should be sent to Make-A-Wish America, 1702 E. Highland Ave., #400, Phoenix, Arizona 85016, include the [mail-in donation form](#) and be postmarked by July 15. Online donations should be submitted through the [Make-A-Wish website](#) by July 31.
16. **Team IMPACT® Update.** The committee was informed that the application deadline for the Team IMPACT 2025-26 fellowship program is May 15.
17. **Management Council/SAAC Summit Preview.** The committee previewed the Management Council/SAAC Summit videoconference taking place July 18. The summit is in conjunction with the next quarterly SAAC meeting and will allow SAAC to connect with administrators serving on the Management Council and discuss Division II hot topics.
18. **SAAC Executive Team Orientation Recap.** The committee's executive team recapped their orientation and goals for 2025. The executive team shared an interest in being more involved in goal teams and how goal teams can work together on common topics.
19. **Overview of Campus and Conference SAAC Guides.** The committee was reminded that the [Division II Campus SAAC Guide](#) and [Division II Conference SAAC Guide](#) are available for campus and conference SAAC members, campus SAAC advisors and conference SAAC liaisons. The guides include information about the purpose of SAAC, how campus and conference SAACs can consider organizing, best practices for SAAC communication, running SAAC meetings and much more.
20. **Division II Committee Reports.** Committee members serving on Division II committees provided updates on their respective committees. The Division II committees represented were the Academic Requirements Committee, Administrative Committee, Championships Committee, Executive Board, Legislation Committee, Management Council, Management Council Identity Subcommittee, and Strategic Planning and Finance Committee.

21. **Association-wide Committee Reports.** Committee members representing Association-wide committees provided updates on their respective committees. The Association-wide committees represented were the Board of Governors, Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports, Committee on Women's Athletics and the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee.
22. **Division II Day Recap.** The committee received a recap on Division II Day and the social media engagement from the day.
23. **Make It Yours Marketing Campaign Update.** The committee received an update on the Make It Yours marketing campaign, which was a paid media campaign targeted toward prospective student-athletes and their parents. The campaign generated 57.4 million impressions, 5.4 million video views and more than 874,000 engagements on social media.
24. **SAAC Logo Pack.** The committee was reminded about the SAAC logos that are available to bring a united and modern look for campus and conference SAACs to identify with and use. Campus and conference SAACs are encouraged to update their existing SAAC logos by pairing their athletics logo with the SAAC mark to support their mission and create visual unity among all the student-athlete leadership groups across the NCAA.
25. **SAAC Policies and Procedures.** The committee reviewed and unanimously approved editorial changes to the committee's policies and procedures. Changes included SAAC's increased representation on the Championship Committee and Legislation Committee, the opportunity and process for an alternative SAAC member to observe a Management Council meeting if the committee's SAAC members are unable to attend, the removal of mentions of the Board of Governors Student-Athlete Engagement Committee and the addition of an internal documents section.
26. **January 2025 and March 2025 Meeting Reports.** The January and March committee meeting reports were reviewed and approved.
27. **Future Meetings.**
 - a. July 16-17, 2025, SAAC meeting; videoconference.
 - b. July 18, 2025, Management Council and SAAC Summit; videoconference.
 - c. November 20-23, 2025, in conjunction with SAAC Super Region Convention; Denver.
 - d. January 12-16, 2026, in conjunction with the 2026 NCAA Convention, Washington, D.C.
 - e. April 11-12, 2026, SAAC meeting; videoconference.

- f. July 17-18, 2026, SAAC meeting; Indianapolis.
- g. July 18-19, 2026, Management Council and SAAC Summit; Indianapolis.
- h. November 21-22, 2026, SAAC meeting; videoconference.

Committee Chair: Avery Hellmuth, Oklahoma Baptist University, Great American Conference
Staff Liaisons: Ryan Jones, Governance
 Marcus Brown, Academic and Membership Affairs
 Morgan Melchert, Eligibility Center
 Megan Villanueva, Academic and Membership Affairs

NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee April 24, 2025, In-Person Meeting	
Attendees:	
Sean Belzer, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference.	
Ben Cherry, California State University, San Marcos, California Collegiate Athletic Association.	
Addison Courtney, Fairmont State University, Mountain East Conference.	
Connor Fournier, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference.	
Haley Gilbert, Augusta University, Peach Belt Conference.	
Theresa Grosbach, Missouri Western State University, Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.	
DJ Guest Jr., California State University, Dominguez Hills, California Collegiate Athletic Association.	
Avery Hellmuth, Oklahoma Baptist University, Great American Conference.	
Scout Huffman, Texas Woman's University, Lone Star Conference.	
Mariah Hughes, Point Loma Nazarene University, Pacific West Conference.	
Rachel McCool, Ashland University, Great Midwest Athletic Conference.	
Dustyn McKenney, Western Oregon University, Great Northwest Athletic Conference.	
Derrick Parker II, Grand Valley State University, At-Large.	
Larry Parkinson, Executive Board Independent Member.	
Darius Satterfield, Elizabeth City State University, Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.	
Alia Scotka, University of West Florida, Gulf South Conference.	
Haley White, Lincoln Memorial University, At-Large.	

Absentees:
Scott Borgmann Jr., Wilmington University (Delaware), Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference.
Adoriyan Daniels, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.
Alexis Devlin, Catawba College, South Atlantic Conference.
Darcey Dorris, Central State University, Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
JJ Hayes, Palm Beach Atlantic University, Sunshine State Conference.
Grace Hoeppner, Michigan Technological University, Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
Zeke Jarzyniecki, Belmont Abbey College, Conference Carolinas.
Rita-Marie Masi, Mercy University, East Coast Conference.
Rowan Ruggerio, American International College, Northeast-10 Conference.
Lily Ventresca, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference.
Guests in Attendance:
Madeleine McKenna.
NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Charlie Baker, Danielle Day, Terri Steeb Gronau, Ethan Hite, Chelsea Hooks, Brittney Jackson, Maritza Jones, Ryan Jones, Karen Keyler, Karen Kirsch, Ann Martin, Morgan Melchert, Mariah Murdock, Kaylen Overway, Angela Red, Megan Villanueva and Jill Willson.