



**REPORT OF THE NCAA DIVISION II
STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 12-14, 2026, IN-PERSON MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

- **None.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Preparation for the 2026 NCAA Convention Division II Business Session.** The NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee reviewed its legislative positions for the 2026 Division II business session and voting policies and procedures.

The legislative proposals discussed are listed below. The committee reviewed all aspects of the proposed legislation in preparation for the business session.

- a. **NCAA Division II Proposal No. 2026-1:** NCAA Division II Membership and Institutional Control, Financial Aid and Playing and Practice Seasons – Emerging Sports for Women – Women's Flag Football.
- b. **Proposal No. 2026-2:** National Collegiate Championships – Acrobatics and Tumbling.
- c. **Proposal No. 2026-3:** National Collegiate Championships – Stunt.
- d. **Proposal No. 2026-4:** Division II Championships – Women's Bowling.
- e. **Proposal No. 2026-5:** Recruiting – Definitions and Applications – Football Recruiting Dead Period.
- f. **Proposal No. 2026-6:** Eligibility – Athletics Eligibility – Seasons of Competition: 10-Semester/15-Quarter Rule – Five Seasons of Competition in 10-Semesters/15-Quarters.
- g. **Proposal No. 2026-7:** Financial Aid – Eligibility for Athletics Aid – Eligibility of Student-Athletes for Athletics Aid – Retroactive Athletics Aid – Issuance of Retroactive Athletics Aid.
- h. **Proposal No. 2026-8:** Playing and Practice Seasons – General Playing-Season Regulations – Time Limits for Athletically Related Activities – Daily and Weekly Hour Limitations – Nonchampionship Segment – Baseball.
- i. **Proposal No. 2026-9:** Playing and Practice Seasons – Baseball – Number of Contests – Maximum Limitations – Institutional – Student-Athlete.
- j. **Proposal No. 2026-10:** Playing and Practice Seasons – Basketball – First Permissible Contest.

- k. **Proposal No. 2026-11:** Playing and Practice Seasons – Golf – Number of Dates of Competition – Maximum Limitations – Institutional – Student-Athlete.
- l. **Proposal No. 2026-12:** Playing and Practice Seasons – Soccer – Preseason Practice and First Date of Practice – Championship Segment.
- m. **Proposal No. 2026-13:** Playing and Practice Seasons – Softball – Number of Contests – Maximum Limitations – Institutional and Student-Athlete – Nonchampionship Segment.
- n. **Proposal No. 2026-14:** Championships Administration – Administration of Division II Championships – Minimum Sponsorship for Division II Championships – Exception for Field Hockey and Women's Rowing.
- o. **Proposal No. 2026-15:** Championships Administration – Administration of Division II Championships – Criteria for Selection of Participants – Criteria for Selection in Team Sports – Required Selection Criteria and Sport-Specific Selection Criteria – NCAA Power Index.
- p. **Proposal No. 2026-16:** Championships Administration – Administration of Division II Championships – Criteria for Selection of Participants – Automatic Qualification – Requirements – Division Championship – Institutions in Final Year of Division II Membership Process.
- q. **Resolution No. R-2026-17:** Division II Football Championship Date Formula.

2. **Discussion on NCAA Division II Executive Board Referral for Proposal No. 2026-6.** During the Executive Board's January 14 meeting, the board recommended asking the Division II membership during the January 16 Division II business session to send the seasons-of-competition proposal back to the governance structure for further review and potential sponsorship for the 2028 Convention. The SAAC convened January 14 to discuss its position on the referral and whether it would speak on the referral during the Division II business session.

The committee voted to support the referral and decided to speak in favor of it during the business session. The committee expressed concern that, based on the legislative grids, some student-athletes were not fully aware of the potential implications of the proposal. The committee feels the division needs to see how its new redshirt rule that became effective Aug. 1, 2025, continues to benefit student-athletes before making significant changes. The new redshirt rule permits student-athletes representing a Division II school in their initial year of collegiate enrollment to participate in up to 30% of the maximum permissible number of contests or dates of competition without using a season of

competition, regardless of sport. The committee also believes Division II should continue to monitor the eligibility landscape across the Association to determine if five seasons of competition are right for the division.

3. **Referral for Feedback from NCAA Division II Legislation Committee.** The committee provided feedback to the Legislation Committee on NCAA Division II Bylaw 17 (playing and practice seasons).
 - a. **Bylaw 17.1.6.3.1 (Sports Other than Football).** Outside of the playing season, in sports other than football, student-athletes are limited to eight hours of countable athletically related activities per week, of which not more than four hours may be spent on team activities. The committee was not supportive of removing the limit of four hours and felt it was still appropriate. The committee noted that the limit was important to maintain the division's Life in the Balance philosophy. The committee also noted student-athletes could do extra skill instruction on their own and felt that having the choice to participate in additional skill instruction rather than being required was important.
 - b. **Bylaw 17.33.1.7 (Maximum Number of Contests/Competition Dates).** The limit on permissible contests/dates of competition during a foreign tour are three football games, 10 basketball games and 10 contests/dates of competition for all other sports. The committee discussed whether the current limits on permissible contests/dates of competition during a foreign tour are still appropriate. Two committee members have experience with a foreign tour and felt the limits were adequate but also noted 10 contests is a lot and would be supportive of lowering the limit.
 - c. **Bylaw 17 (Involvement of Coaching Staff).** In team sports, no member of the coaching staff of a member institution may be involved in any capacity (e.g., coach, official, player or league/team administrator) at any time (i.e., during the academic year, vacation periods and summer) with an outside team that involves any student-athlete with eligibility remaining from the institution's team. The committee discussed whether a member of the institution's coaching staff in team sports should be permitted to be involved with an outside team that involves a student-athlete on the institution's team during the summer. The committee was not in favor of allowing coaches to be involved with outside teams that involve their current student-athletes and felt that it is important to maintain that separation.
4. **Election of 2026 SAAC Executive Team.** The committee elected Rachel McCool, Ashland University, Great Midwest Athletic Conference, as chair of SAAC for 2026; Connor Fournier, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, as vice chair; Zeke Jarzyniecki, Belmont Abbey College, Conference Carolinas, as external communications coordinator; and Lily Ventresca, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference, as internal operations coordinator.

5. **Election of 2026 Division II Executive Board Representatives.** The committee elected Ryan Lovelace, Lee University, Gulf South Conference; and Rita-Marie Masi, Mercy University, East Coast Conference, as Executive Board representatives for 2026.
6. **Election of 2026 NCAA Division II Management Council Representatives.** The committee elected Rachel McCool, Ashland University, Great Midwest Athletic Conference; and re-elected Darius Satterfield, Elizabeth City State University, Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, as Management Council representatives for 2026.
7. **Election of 2026 NCAA Division II and Association-Wide Committee Representatives.** New representatives were selected to serve on various Division II and Association-wide committees.
 - a. Yahir Chairez-Salazar, Colorado School of Mines, at-large representative, will serve on the NCAA Committee on Access, Opportunity and Impact.
 - b. Darcey Dorris, Central State University, Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, will serve on the Division II Legislation Committee. Connor Fournier, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, will also serve on the Legislation Committee as part of his vice chair responsibilities.
 - c. Mariah Hughes, Point Loma Nazarene University, Pacific West Conference, will serve on the NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Reinstatement Committee.
 - d. Abbie McCants, Coker University, South Atlantic Conference, will serve on the NCAA Division II Academic Requirements Committee.
 - e. Emma Neal, Maryville University of Saint Louis, Great Lakes Valley Conference, will join Sean Belzer, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference, on the NCAA Division II Championships Committee.
 - f. Gabe Zeldes, Wayne State University (Michigan), Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, will serve on the NCAA Concussion Safety Advisory Group.
8. **New Appointments.** There are eight new members joining the Division II SAAC: Tiayo Adelekan, Chestnut Hill College, Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference; Lorenza Foster-Simbulan, Dominican University of California, at-large representative; Ronnie Johnson, University of Arkansas, Monticello, Great American Conference; Maybellene Ledesma, Davis & Elkins College, Mountain East Conference; Brelee Nichols, Western New Mexico University, Lone Star Conference; Alex Robbins, University of South Carolina Beaufort, Peach Belt Conference; Tyson Sexton, University of Montevallo, at-large representative; and Carter Walsh, Northwest Nazarene University, Great Northwest Athletic Conference.

9. **Discussion with NCAA President Charlie Baker.** SAAC members introduced themselves to President Baker and engaged with him on sports wagering, the ongoing discussions around student-athlete employment and potential impacts on Division II, how SAAC can enhance the student-athlete voice and areas he would recommend the committee to dedicate time toward.
10. **Discussion with NCAA Office of Government Relations.** The committee met with Tim Buckley, senior vice president of external affairs; Dawn Buth, managing director of government relations; and Austin Meo, assistant director of government relations for an update on congressional engagement. The committee discussed the progress of the SCORE Act, next steps with the act and the continued importance of letter writing. The committee was recognized for its congressional engagement work and was encouraged to continue advocating. The committee also discussed sports wagering and the progress being made on Capitol Hill. The committee was encouraged to contact Buckley, Buth or Meo to schedule a virtual congressional engagement update with their conference SAAC.
11. **Discussion with Division II Executive Board Chair Colleen Perry Keith.** The committee met with Executive Board Chair Colleen Perry Keith over lunch to discuss advice for life after sport, her thoughts on the future of the division, her priorities during her time as chair and the progress the division has made to date.
12. **Discussion with NCAA Chief Medical Officer Deena Casiero.** The committee received updates from Dr. Deena Casiero regarding mental health, the Sport Science Institute's mental health first aid training initiative, sports wagering resources, the concussion research being funded by the NCAA and the United States Department of Defense, and updates that are being considered for the revised NCAA Substance Misuse Prevention Tool Kit.
13. **Discussion with NCAA Managing Director of Legal Affairs Jared Tidemann.** The committee received updates from Jared Tidemann about the House settlement and Ray settlement. The committee also received updates related to current employment cases and various eligibility cases.
14. **Discussion on Festival Budget Allocation.** The committee continued its November 2025 discussion on how to enhance the student-athlete experience at Division II championships using the budget dollars allocated to the Division II National Championships Festivals following the last festival in fall 2026. The committee recapped its initial ideas from last November, including enhanced web streaming production, postgame interviews, nutrition stations and awarding trophies in a celebratory moment, such as at regional championships. The committee also recommended additional signage, maintaining quality participant gifts and increasing officials' pay due to their direct impact on competition.

15. **Discussion on SAAC's Eighth Super Region Convention.** The committee discussed the eighth SAAC Super Region Convention for schools in the South Central and West regions at the Grand Hyatt in Denver, held November 21-23, 2025. The committee provided feedback on how the convention was run, the speakers and discussed ideas for future super region conventions.
16. **Updates on 2025-26 SAAC Goals.** SAAC finalized its 2025-26 goals in July 2025 and reconfirmed its goals for the spring of 2026 during its January meeting. This academic year, two activation ideas are being implemented.
 - a. Maintaining consistent communication with campus and conference SAACs to keep student-athletes informed on Division II events and issues.
 - b. Encouraging and spotlighting community engagement efforts in Division II conferences and schools.

The community engagement task force noted they will be sending an email to their SAAC Network in February and April, asking for any community engagement, Make-A-Wish, and/or Team IMPACT efforts to highlight on Division II SAAC's social media. The communications task force discussed an internal spreadsheet that has been created to provide the committee with a checks and balances system for when they are asked to send communication to their SAAC Network.
17. **Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award.** The Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award recognizes faculty members at Division II schools for their dedication to supporting and mentoring student-athletes, as well as their commitment to Division II student-athletes' lifelong learning, competition and well-being. The committee recognized Eric Gaynor of Bentley University as the 2025 Faculty Mentor Award winner as selected by SAAC's Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee.
18. **2026 Award of Excellence.** The committee reviewed the finalists for the 2026 Division II Award of Excellence as selected by SAAC's Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee. Walsh University was named the 2026 Award of Excellence winner for its efforts honoring veterans, active-duty service members and local first responders in celebration of America's 250th birthday. Johnson C. Smith University received the runner-up prize for engaging kindergarten through eighth grade students through campus-based programs like AVID Day, Literacy Boot Camp and the Scholastic Book Fair. The University of South Carolina Aiken garnered third place for its inclusive community engagement event "A Night in Wonderland."
19. **Executive Board, Management Council, SAAC Joint Meeting.** The committee reviewed the agenda and discussed the information that would be covered during the Executive Board, Management Council and SAAC joint meeting. Committee members had roundtable discussions and engaged in professional development.

20. **Joint SAAC Lunch.** The committee reviewed the agenda and discussed the joint SAAC lunch that was attended by the national SAACs from all three divisions. The three SAACs had the opportunity to speak with President Baker and NCAA Board of Governors Chair Jim Phillips.
21. **Leadership Development Opportunities.** Mark Trumbo, director of leadership development, and Christal Peterson, associate director of leadership development, spoke with the committee about opportunities for student-athletes through leadership development. The opportunities include the NCAA Career in Sports Forum, NCAA Emerging Leaders Seminar, NCAA Postgraduate Internship Program and NCAA Student-Athlete Leadership Forum.
22. **Make-A-Wish®.** The committee received an update from Nicole Colley on the 2026 Week of Wishes occurring February 14-21. During the week, institutions are encouraged to consider hosting a fundraising event for Make-A-Wish, such as Make-A-Wish games, and promote the division's partnership. All donations should be submitted through each school's Make-A-Wish page at ncaadii.wish.org.
23. **Team IMPACT®.** The committee received an update from Erin Loughlin and Amy VanRyn on Division II's continued partnership with Team IMPACT. Division II currently has 194 matches involving 100 campuses and all 23 Division II conferences. Since the partnership began, Division II has had 815 matches involving over 20,000 student-athletes on 217 campuses and all 23 conferences. The committee learned the 2026-27 Team IMPACT Fellowship application is now open.
24. **Make It Yours Paid Media Update.** Division II staff provided an update on its partnership with Paciolan and the continued activation of the Make It Yours brand. Last fall, Division II launched a targeted paid media strategy with Paciolan among prospective student-athletes and parents that is aimed at strengthening the perception and understanding of Division II nationally by increasing awareness that Division II is the balance between athletics, academics and community engagement. Division II is increasing brand awareness and perception by promoting the division through paid media on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok; paid search leading up to the Division I transfer window; utilizing video on YouTube and over-the-top streaming services; and creating geofences around select high school showcases to promote the division to prospective student-athletes and their parents.
25. **Division II Committee Reports.** SAAC members serving on Division II committees provided updates on their respective committees. The Division II committees represented were the Administrative Committee, Championships Committee, Executive Board, Legislation Committee, Management Council, Strategic Planning and Finance Committee and Student-Athlete Reinstatement Committee.

26. **Association-Wide Committee Reports.** Members serving on Association-wide committees provided updates on their respective committees. The Association-wide committees represented were the Board of Governors, Committee on Access, Opportunity and Impact, and Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports.
27. **Cross Divisional Student-Athlete Group Update and Discussion.** The committee received an update on the most recent meeting involving the Cross Divisional Student-Athlete Group and a discussion the attendees had about Division I SAAC considering a recommendation to change Student-Athlete Advisory Committee to Student-Athlete Advocacy Committee. The committee learned Division I SAAC is considering a name change to clarify the committee's primary responsibility to advocate for student-athlete welfare, policy input and representation in governance decisions; enhance visibility through the use of the word "Advocacy" to signify active engagement in protecting and advancing student-athlete interests; reinforce authority that student-athlete voices are central in Division I decision-making; and to align with ongoing efforts to ensure student-athlete representation is not only advisory but influential and meaningful in Division I governance processes.

Division II SAAC discussed Division I SAAC's potential name change and feels it is important to have a unified name among the three divisions; however, they expressed support for Division I making the change given the committee's rationale. The committee did not feel the change was necessary in Division II. The committee believes that they are advocating by advising and there are bigger issues for Division II SAAC to tackle. The committee feels that now is not the right time to consider this change in Division II, considering there are conferences and campuses trying to establish themselves.

28. **Prepare Conference Meeting Summaries.** The committee reviewed discussion topics to be shared during conference meetings later in the week.
29. **November 2025 meeting report.** The November 2025 committee meeting report was reviewed and approved.
30. **Future Meetings.**
 - a. April 11-12, 2026, SAAC meeting, videoconference.
 - b. July 17-18, 2026, SAAC meeting; Indianapolis.
 - c. July 18-19, 2026, Management Council and SAAC Summit; Indianapolis.
 - d. November 21-22, 2026, SAAC meeting; videoconference.
 - e. January 11-15, 2027, in conjunction with the 2027 NCAA Convention, Anaheim, California.

- f. April 2027, in conjunction with Division II SAAC Super Region Convention; dates and location to be determined.
- g. July 16-17, 2027, SAAC meeting; Indianapolis.
- h. July 17-18, 2027, Management Council and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Summit; Indianapolis.
- i. November 2027, in conjunction with Division II SAAC Super Region Convention; dates and location to be determined.

Committee Chair: Avery Hellmuth, Oklahoma Baptist University, Great American Conference

Staff Liaisons: Ryan Jones, Governance and Member Services

Marcus Brown, Governance and Member Services

Morgan Melchert, Eligibility Center

Katie Mucci, Governance and Member Services

Megan Villanueva, Governance and Member Services

NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee January 12-14, 2026, In-Person Meeting	
Attendees:	
Sean Belzer, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference.	
Scott Borgmann Jr., Wilmington University (Delaware), Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference.	
Yahir Chairez-Salazar, Colorado School of Mines, At-Large.	
Ben Cherry, California State University, San Marcos, California Collegiate Athletic Association.	
Addison Courtney, Fairmont State University, Mountain East Conference.	
Darcey Dorris, Central State University, Southern Intercollegiate Athletic 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.	
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.	
Zeke Jarzyniecki, Belmont Abbey College, Conference Carolinas.	
Mário Kirkov, Eckerd College, Sunshine State Conference.	
Ryan Lovelace, Lee University, Gulf South Conference.	
Vivian Martinez, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California Collegiate Athletic Association.	
Rita-Marie Masi, Mercy University, East Coast Conference.	

Abbie McCants, Coker University, South Atlantic Conference.
Rachel McCool, Ashland University, Great Midwest Athletic Conference.
Dustyn McKenney, Western Oregon University, Great Northwest Athletic Conference.
Emma Neal, Maryville University of Saint Louis, Great Lakes Valley Conference.
Larry Parkinson, Executive Board Independent Member.
Rowan Ruggerio, American International College, Northeast 10 Conference.
Darius Satterfield, Elizabeth City State University, Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.
Lily Ventresca, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference.
Haley White, Lincoln Memorial University, At-Large.
Gabe Zeldes, Wayne State University (Michigan), Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletics Conference.
Absentees:
Adoriyan Daniels, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.
Derrick Parker II, Grand Valley State University, At-Large.
Guests in Attendance:
Nicole Colley, Madisson Elmore, Colleen Perry Keith, Erin Loughlin and Amy VanRyn.
NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Charlie Baker, Marcus Brown, Tim Buckley, Dawn Buth, Deena Casiero, Michael Cioroianu, Ryan Jones, Karen Keyler, Karen Kirsch, Morgan Melchert, Austin Meo, Katie Mucci, Kaylen Overway, Noah Pennington, Christal Peterson, Anne Rohlman, Jared Tidemann, Mark Trumbo, Megan Villanueva, Courtney Wengryn and Matt White.