



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JULY 16-17, 2025, VIDEOCONFERENCE

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Discussion on 2025-26 SAAC Goals.** The NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee reflected on its goals and priorities from the 2024-25 academic year. The committee discussed feedback on what went well and what missed the mark within every goal team. The committee also reviewed all they accomplished this past year.

The committee reviewed and discussed the framework surrounding the three E's – empowering student-athletes with resources, empathizing with their concerns, and enhancing their voice and overall experience. These areas were identified as the north star and will continue to serve as the foundation for a broader initiative that will include specific themes and corresponding subgoals in 2025-26. The committee supported a timeline in which the first two themes will be launched in the fall and revisited in January, while the theme related to sports wagering will be addressed in the spring pending the three NCAA divisions removing the prohibition of wagering on professional sports. A task force composed of SAAC members will be assigned to each theme and will be responsible for guiding the implementation of the identified subgoals. The themes include, to encourage and spotlight community engagement efforts in Division II conferences and institutions, maintain consistent communication with campus and conference SAACs to keep student-athletes informed on Division II events and issues, and increase education and harm-reduction efforts for sports wagering.

2. **Discussion on 2026 NCAA Convention Proposed Legislation.** SAAC reviewed four proposals for the 2026 NCAA Convention that are sponsored by the Division II governance structure and the Division II membership. The committee discussed pros and cons for each proposal.
3. **Discussion with NCAA President Charlie Baker.** The committee met with President Charlie Baker to discuss topics related to ensuring student-athletes from underrepresented backgrounds feel supported; prioritizing harm reduction strategies as sports wagering is potentially deregulated; and how the student athlete voice will continue to be heard and represented in the decision-making processes.

4. **New Division II Former Student-Athlete Representative on the NCAA 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 held an election for its newest representative on the Board of Governors, which will be announced in August.
5. **SCORE Act Update and Joint SAAC Statement.** The committee received an update on the Student Compensation and Opportunity Through Rights and Endorsements Act (SCORE Act) as an important step in protecting student-athletes' rights, opportunities and well-being. SAAC Chair Avery Hellmuth wrote a [joint statement](#) expressing support for the bill with the chairs of the Divisions I and III SAACs.
6. **Update on the 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 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 committee reviewed the May and June videoconference meeting reports.
7. **Update on the Cross-Divisional Group of SAAC Members.** The committee received an update on the development of the cross-divisional group of SAAC members who will facilitate dialogue within the student-athlete community and provide the Board of Governors with student-athlete input on Association-wide policies and issues that impact student-athletes. The committee approved the charter for a new cross-divisional student-athlete group and approved to add this document to its policies and procedures.
8. **Update on the Division II Operating Plan.** The committee was provided with an overview of the draft Division II operating plan that includes potential action steps and timelines based on input from the Division II Think Tank conducted last fall and feedback from membership stakeholders, including the comprehensive membership survey that was conducted after the 2025 Convention. The committee reviewed each of the five operating areas – Academics, Athletics, Health and Wellness, Governance and Operations and Positioning– and did not have any additional feedback to share.
9. **Emerging Sports for Women Program Legislative Update.** The committee received an update on the growth of women's flag football and three proposals all NCAA divisions are considering as part of their legislative processes. The proposals include adding flag football to the Emerging Sports for Women Program; establishing stunt as a National Collegiate Championship; and establishing acrobatics and tumbling as a National Collegiate Championship.

10. **Update on the NCAA Diversity and Inclusion Social Media Campaign.** The committee received an update on changes that are being made to the diversity and inclusion social media campaign. The committee offered feedback on ideas that are being considered, including the campaign themes and the duration of the campaign.
11. **Discussion on Inclusive Events Resource.** The committee met with Ashland Johnson, founder of the Inclusion Playbook, and Jean Merrill, NCAA director of inclusion, to provide feedback on a resource being developed to help event organizers make both competitive and noncompetitive events more inclusive, accessible and welcoming. During the session, student-athletes provided valuable feedback on what contributes to a supportive event environment, including friendly staff; inclusive signage; personalized touches; flexible scheduling; and intentional facilitation of sensitive topics, such as mental health and Title IX. Committee members emphasized the importance of early input opportunities, not just post-event surveys, and highlighted the need for accommodations around dietary restrictions and accessibility. This input will inform the creation of a practical guide for enhancing inclusion at future NCAA events. Student-athletes were encouraged to follow up or share additional feedback directly with Ms. Johnson at ashland@inclusionplaybook.com.
12. **Team IMPACT® Update.** Team IMPACT matches children who have life-threatening and/or chronic illnesses with athletics teams. The benefits of having a team matched with a child are great, both for the student-athletes and the child. The committee learned that a strategic alliance has been formed between the NCAA and Team IMPACT that will build on the partnership Division II has created with Team IMPACT. The new strategic alliance includes Divisions I and III and will result in more student-athletes being matched with families.

Team IMPACT is interested in growing Division II fellows to increase community engagement and overall awareness. Currently, there are over 300 active fellowships across the country on 138 different campuses. For more information on the fellowship program, the committee was encouraged to click [here](#) and to contact Morgan Melchert at mmelchert@ncaa.org or Amy VanRyn at avanryn@teamimpact.org with questions.
13. **Make-A-Wish® Update.** Division II continues to partner with Make-A-Wish to create life-changing wish experiences for children with critical illnesses. Division II has raised more than \$7 million toward granting the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. Over 795 wish experiences have been granted through Division II contributions. The committee agreed on the division's 2025-26 fundraising goal of \$265,000 for membership donations, after learning the division is expected to exceed its 2024-25 goal of \$175,000.

14. **November 2025 SAAC Super Region Convention Preview.** The next Division II SAAC Super Region Convention will be held November 21-23 at the Grand Hyatt in Denver. Active member institutions in the following conferences will have an opportunity to send one administrator and two student-athletes: California Collegiate Athletic Association, Great Northwest Athletic Conference, Lone Star Conference, Pacific West Conference and Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. Each conference office can also send one conference office administrator. Registration for the super region convention opens in August in the NCAA Program Hub.
15. **Award of Excellence.** The [Division II Award of Excellence](#) 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. The committee received an overview of the award's timeline and recommendations made by the committee, Management Council Identity Subcommittee and NCAA staff over the last few months. The draft timeline will now be reviewed by the Identity Subcommittee for approval.

Starting Monday, September 1, each active Division II school and conference is eligible to submit its best community engagement activity and/or event that occurred between December 2024 and November 2025 by Saturday, November 15 in Program Hub.
16. **Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award.** The Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award honors faculty members at Division II schools for their dedication in supporting and mentoring student-athletes, as well as their commitment to Division II student-athletes' lifelong learning, competition and well-being. The committee noted that the nomination process for the 2025 Dr. Dave Pariser Faculty Mentor Award is open, and the nomination form is available [here](#). SAAC representatives should work with their conference office and conference SAAC to nominate one representative from an active member institution for the award. Division II independent institutions may also nominate one representative each for the award. The deadline for submitting nominations is Tuesday, October 15. SAAC's Honors, Awards and Recognition Subcommittee will choose the recipient and present them with the award at the 2026 Convention in Washington, D.C. For more information on the award, the committee was encouraged to reference the award's [frequently asked questions](#).
17. **Nominations for the LG Life's Good Coaches Award.** LG is shining light on coaches who foster a positive environment for their student-athletes and go beyond the game to make a real impact. The LG Life's Good Coaches Award honors NCAA coaches who have made consistent efforts to champion the mental well-being of players. Oklahoma Christian head men's golf coach David Lynn was [named an inaugural recipient](#) of the award in 2024.

Student-athletes are encouraged to share their story and nominate their coach by Monday, September 15. For more details and nomination submissions, the committee was encouraged to visit lg.com/ncaa.

18. **Division II Championships Committee Report.** SAAC members serving on the Division II Championships Committee provided updates and discussed the committee recommending a change to the football date formula that would add a 13th week to the regular season and move the championship game to January. The committee also learned that the Championships Committee recommended that the Division II National Championships Festivals be sunset after the 2026 fall festival and reallocate the festival budget to enhance all Division II student-athlete championship experiences.
19. **Board of Governors Report.** Madeleine McKenna, Division II's graduated student-athlete on the Board of Governors, shared her last update on the board with the committee.
20. **SAAC and Management Council Summit.** The committee prepared for the SAAC and Management Council Summit occurring virtually July 18. The committee prepared to lead and facilitate discussions during the summit with members from the Management Council.
21. **NCAA Postgraduate Internship Opportunity.** The 2026-27 application for the [NCAA Postgraduate Internship Program](#) opens Tuesday, August 12 at 8 a.m. Eastern time. NCAA leadership development staff will host an informational webinar related to the postgraduate internship program from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Eastern time on Tuesday, August 19. Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern time Friday, September 12.
22. **SAAC Network.** National SAAC should make sure their conference's SAAC Network is updated with both campus SAAC advisors and presidents and conference SAAC liaisons for the 2025-26 academic year by Monday, September 15. If the committee has questions or is in need of some best practices, they were encouraged to contact their fellow committee members or Ryan Jones at rjones@ncaa.org.
23. **SAAC Annual Reports.** Each national SAAC representative serving on behalf of a conference is responsible for providing a written report by email to their commissioner by Sunday, August 31. The report should summarize the work of their conference SAAC and national SAAC. When the report is submitted to the commissioner, SAAC members are asked to send it to Mr. Jones at rjones@ncaa.org.
24. **April Meeting Report.** The April 2025 committee meeting report was reviewed and approved.

25. Future Meetings.

- a. September 7, 2025, SAAC meeting; videoconference.
- b. November 20-23, 2025, in conjunction with the SAAC Super Region Convention; Denver.
- c. January 12-16, 2026, in conjunction with the 2026 NCAA Convention, Washington, D.C.
- d. April 11-12, 2026, SAAC meeting; videoconference.
- e. July 17-18, 2026, SAAC meeting; Indianapolis.
- f. July 18-19, 2026, Management Council and SAAC Summit; Indianapolis.
- g. 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
 Katie Mucci, Governance
 Morgan Melchert, Eligibility Center
 Megan Villanueva, Academic and Membership Affairs

NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee July 16-17, 2025, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Sean Belzer, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference.	
Scott Borgmann Jr., Wilmington University (Delaware), Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference.	
Ben Cherry, California State University, San Marcos, California Collegiate Athletic Association.	
Addison Courtney, Fairmont State University, Mountain East Conference.	
Adoriyan Daniels, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association. (July 16)	
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. (July 16)	
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. <i>(July 16)</i>
Zeke Jarzyniecki, Belmont Abbey College, Conference Carolinas.
Mário Kirkov, Eckerd College, Sunshine State Conference.
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, At-Large.
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.
Absentees:
Adoriyan Daniels, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association. <i>(July 17)</i>
Haley Gilbert, Augusta University, Peach Belt Conference. <i>(July 17)</i>
Mariah Hughes, Point Loma Nazarene University, Pacific West Conference. <i>(July 17)</i>
Derrick Parker II, Grand Valley State University, At-Large.
Alia Scotka, University of West Florida, Gulf South Conference.
Guests in Attendance:
Hilary Butler, Jordan DeGouw, Paige Glick, Ashland Johnson, Madeleine McKenna, Roberta Page, Mattie Prior, Amy VanRyn and Jill Willson.
NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Charlie Baker, Marcus Brown, Terri Steeb Gronau, Stephannnie Harvey-Vandenberg, Chelsea Hooks, Maritza Jones, Ryan Jones, Karen Keyler, Karen Kirsch, Taylor Koper, Kat Lin, Morgan Melchert, Jean Merrill, Gretchen Miron, Katie Mucci, Tyler Noragon, Kaylen Overway, Angela Red, Megan Villanueva and Courtney Wengryn.