

REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION III STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE  
JULY 9, 2025, VIDEOCONFERENCE

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative items.**

- None.

**2. Nonlegislative items.**

**a. Division III Strategic Plan implementation for 2025-26.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the Management and Presidents Councils approve the implementation plan for the second year of the division's strategic plan for the 2024-26 budget biennium as outlined in Attachment A.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.
- (3) Rationale. The Strategic Planning and Finance Committee is charged with monitoring the division's strategic plan and has collaborated with the governance structure to update the planned implementation for 2025-26, the second year of the 2024-26 budget biennium. The items in red font in Attachment A are the identified priority initiatives and programs.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. See Attachment A for the projected budget breakdown.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The Division III Strategic Plan is developed to support the student-athlete collegiate experience as a core component. The 2025-26 implementation includes programs and initiatives to help accomplish that goal.

**b. Championship per diem increases for 2025-26 and 2026-27.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the Management and Presidents Councils approve an increase in per diem to \$150 (traveling team) and \$60 (hosts) for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years (FY26/FY27).
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.
- (3) Rationale. Due to rising costs associated with championships participation (e.g., meals and hotels) and the controlled nature of this specific per diem increase, the Championships Committee during its March meeting discussed the previously approved incremental increases in per diem for future budgets and noted that an increase would provide immediate benefits to participating institutions without exceeding the amount of \$150 that was approved for FY28. The Strategic Planning and Finance Committee, Management Council and Presidents Council already indicated initial support for this increase during their spring meetings.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. The estimated budget impact would be an additional \$1.2 million dollars in 2025-26 and \$608,000 in 2026- 27. There would be no additional

cost for the 2027-28 academic year, as the \$150/\$60 rate already had been earmarked for that fiscal year. The additional funds would be supported by the amount above the division's mandated reserve.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. The increase will benefit institutions and the student-athlete participants during their postseason experience.

**c. Regional Rules Seminar live streaming.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the Management and Presidents Councils approve funding to livestream educational sessions during the 2026 Regional Rules Seminar.

- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.

- (3) Rationale. The Division III Regional Rules Seminar offers impactful educational opportunities for institutions to stay informed about NCAA rules and regulations. Livestreaming the event eases an institution's administrative burden by reducing travel costs and logistical challenges. Establishing funding for a virtual option provides an invaluable educational tool for those in the Division III membership unable to travel to seminars. The livestreaming option would not satisfy the membership requirement to attend the seminar in person once every three years. The Strategic Planning and Finance Committee encouraged that livestream participants be surveyed to assess engagement and inform future funding requests.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$30,000.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Welcome and review of agenda.** The chair, Marc Camille, welcomed the group and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Eastern time and acknowledged new members Angel Mason, the athletics director at Berry College, and Meghan Roman, the athletics director at Illinois College who is a new Management Council representative assigned to the committee.
2. **Report from the March 25 in-person meeting.** The committee approved the report from its March 25 in-person meeting as presented.
3. **Presidents Council Futures Subcommittee reports.** The committee reviewed the reports from the subcommittee's most recent meetings, during which the subcommittee confirmed its updated mission and purpose, which is to serve as an action-oriented, future-looking thought leadership body that reviews and provides insights on current external issues with potential long-range impact on Division III intercollegiate athletics while simultaneously monitoring future issues. The subcommittee convenes at least four times annually and serves on behalf of the Presidents Council and in concert with the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee.

With direction from the Presidents Council, the subcommittee identified several strategic priorities: future financial reviews and stability; congressional engagement that includes a collaborative approach to address the current external threats to higher education that will likely negatively affect Division III institutions; Division III membership stability; branding and marketing the division; and reducing costs for member institution athletics departments. SPFC members agreed with this initial assessment.

4. **Presidents Council/Management Council summary of actions.** The committee reviewed the summary of actions from the April Division III Presidents and Management Council meetings, noting particularly the items pertaining to the SPFC, including approval of the recommended increase in the streaming stipend for preliminary-round hosts of the Division III Football Championship, and the ongoing discussion regarding whether to continue the current pause to the membership dues assessment after 2026-27.
5. **Division III Philosophy Statement.** The committee reviewed the division's philosophy statement and referred to it during several agenda items.
6. **SPFC policies and procedures.** As standard practice, the committee reviewed its policies and procedures that are formally updated and approved each November.
7. **Division III budget guidelines and principles.** The committee reviewed and reiterated support for the division's budget guidelines and principles that were formally approved by the Management and Presidents Councils last summer and shared with all Division III governance and sport committees to help inform decisions with a budget impact. [See Attachment B]
8. **Student-athlete experience resource.** The committee reviewed and offered feedback on a one-page document that outlines how the division defines and supports the student-athlete experience. The committee will revisit the document during its November meeting.
9. **Division III budget.**
  - a. **2024-25 budget-to-actuals.** The committee reviewed the budget-to-actuals through the end of May.
  - b. **Future budget projections.** The committee revisited the projections it reviewed during its March meeting, noting that the new fiscal year 2025 budget is \$6 million more than fiscal year 2024 budget due to revenue gained from the NCAA's two broadcast agreements. Also, the division's new enhancements – the per diem increases specified in Action Item 2-b, championship bracket expansion, and championship live streaming, as well as the health and safety grant and the new program to provide mental health training to all head coaches and athletic trainers, contributed to the intentional increase to spend from the excess of mandated reserves.
10. **Strategic priorities.** The committee reviewed an updated document summarizing the work of the Division III national office staff to support the division's governance structure priorities.

The document outlines staff's engagement with committees to provide support and timelines to allow the governance structure to move strategic priorities from concept to implementation.

- 11. Division III Strategic Plan.** The committee reviewed the final implementation of the strategic plan for 2024-25 [see Attachment C] and supported recommending that the Division III Management and Presidents Councils adopt the implementation plan for 2025-26. [See Action Item 2-a.]
- 12. Division III Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program.** The committee reviewed the outcomes of the three conference grant audits and approved the FY26 conference grant tier allocations.
- 13. Championships Committee updates.** The committee reviewed the Championships Committee's most recent reports, noting the committee's recommendation to increase per diem as specified in Action Item 2-b above and support for the new stability policy outlined in Agenda item 14 below.
- 14. National Collegiate championships stability policy.** The committee approved the recommendation to establish a budget policy to manage the creation of divisional championships from existing National Collegiate championships. The policy states that after divisional approval of a division-specific championship (i.e., adoption of legislation at the Convention), the new divisional championship effective date shall be after a minimum of two National Collegiate championships have taken place and with at least two years notice provided to the National Collegiate championship committee and sponsoring members in the sport. (For example, if Division III were to adopt legislation at the 2026 Convention to establish a Division III Women's Wrestling Championship, it would not begin until the winter of 2028 after the 2026 and 2027 National Collegiate championships have taken place.) The two-year waiting period offers time to properly budget for the championship, coordinate the administration of the new championship (e.g., establish format and qualifications processes; host site selection, committee creation) and allows the membership time to schedule their regular-season contests and post-season tournaments accordingly.
- 15. Regional Rules Seminar livestreaming.** The committee reviewed a request from the Division III Membership Committee to recommend that the Management and Presidents Councils approve funding to livestream NCAA Regional Rules Seminar educational sessions. The committee supported the recommendation, but suggested staff collect livestream participant evaluation data to help inform future recommendations. [See Action Item 2-c]
- 16. Division III live streaming and branding update.** The committee received an update on live streaming for Division III championships in 2024-25, noting the increased exposure through the agreements with Hudl, NCAA.com and ESPN+. Overall, the division live streamed 810 championship contests and had 65.6 million minutes watched.
- 17. Division III Enrichment Fund initiatives with a budget impact.** The committee received updates on the following programs and noted the positive impact of each on the division:

- Division III Diversity Grants.
- Institute for Administrative Advancement.
- College Sports Communicators Student Program.
- New Athletics Director Orientation.
- Division III Commissioners Association and National Association of Sports Officials Grant.
- National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators Grant.

**18. Future meetings.** The committee will convene via videoconference in November on a date to be determined.

**19. Adjournment.** The videoconference adjourned at 4:02 p.m. Eastern time.

*Committee Chair:* Marc Camille, Albertus Magnus College  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Louise McCleary, Division III Governance  
 Bill Regan, Division III Governance  
 Cara Hubert, Administrative Services  
 Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs

| Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee<br>July 9, 2025, Videoconference |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Attendees:</b>  |  |
| Marc Camille, Albertus Magnus College.   |  |
| Stephanie Dutton, United East Conference.  |  |
| Michael Harrison, Framingham State University.   |  |
| Rob Larson, Luther College.  |  |
| Carolyn Lepre, Salisbury University.   |  |
| Angel Mason, Berry College.  |  |
| Chris Spells, University of California, Santa Cruz.                                    |  |
| Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.   |  |
| Shanna Trone, Agnes Scott College.   |  |
| <b>Absentees:</b>  |  |
| Muthu Meenakshisundaram, University of Minnesota, Morris.                              |  |
| Joe Onderko, Presidents' Athletic Conference.  |  |
| Meghan Roman, Illinois College.  |  |
| <b>Guests in Attendance:</b>   |  |
| Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor.   |  |
| <b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>   |  |
| Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers and Bill Regan.  |  |
| <b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>   |  |
| Nate Flannery, Malik Henry, Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Lisa Rogers and Ali Spungen.       |  |

# Division III Strategic Plan

2024-26 Budget Biennium **[Year 2: 2025-26]**

**Vision Statement:** Division III will be a dynamic and engaging group of colleges, universities and conferences of varying sizes and missions committed to an environment that encourages and supports health and safety, diversity, values, fairness, and equity, and places the highest priority on the overall educational experience of its student-athletes in the conduct of intercollegiate athletics.

**Mission Statement:** Promoting the student-athlete academic and athletic experience, with a commitment and dedication to the membership through effective inclusion, communication, and engagement.



**DIVISION III**  
**DISCOVER | DEVELOP | DEDICATE**

## INTRODUCTION

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The Division III Strategic Plan serves many purposes. It begins with the Division III Philosophy Statement to establish the framework from which the division's programs, resource allocations, and regulatory decisions are made. It highlights the Division III Strategic Positioning Platform to clarify the practical impact of the Division III philosophy and summarizes the division's strategic priorities by outlining what must be accomplished in the current budget cycle for the division to be successful.

The plan also serves to highlight the programs and services offered for the division's membership. This list of offerings is arranged in a way that demonstrates the connection of each Division III program to the NCAA Strategic Plan and explains when a program or initiative is funded from Division III dollars or a different Association budget. To bring further transparency to the division's operations, the plan justifies every line of the Division III budget against the philosophy statement or NCAA Constitution. Finally, the plan includes the division's budget policies and a note on its history, which tracks the evolution of the division's entire strategic initiatives program.

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## DIVISION III PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The purpose of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is to assist its members in developing the basis for consistent, equitable competition while minimizing infringement on the freedom of individual members to determine their own unique objectives and programs. The philosophy statement articulates principles that represent a commitment to Division III membership and shall serve as a guide for the preparation of legislation by the division and for planning and implementation of programs by institutions and conferences.

- (a) Division III members affirm the purposes and fundamental policy of the NCAA, as set forth in Constitution Article 1 with emphasis on:
  - (1) Division III members shall establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's activities are conducted with the appropriate primary emphasis on the student-athlete's academic experience.
  - (2) Division III intercollegiate athletics shall be conducted in a manner designed to protect, support, and enhance the physical and mental health and safety of student-athletes.
  - (3) Division III members shall be committed to the creation of diverse and inclusive environments with respect for and sensitivity to the dignity of every person.
  - (4) Division III athletics shall be conducted in a manner free of gender bias.
- (b) NCAA Constitution Article 2 establishes the independent authority of Division III to organize itself and determine its own governing structure and membership.
  - (1) Institutional presidents and chancellors have the ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of Division III intercollegiate athletics at the national, conference and institutional levels.
  - (2) Institutional and conference members determine policy at the national level through the Division III governance and legislative processes.
  - (3) Key institution and conference constituents who play an integral role in the governance and operation of Division III at the national, conference and institutional levels include, but are not limited to athletics direct reports, athletics diversity and inclusion designees, athletics health care administrators, coaches, conference commissioners, directors of athletics, faculty athletics representatives, presidents and chancellors, senior compliance administrators, senior woman administrators, and student-athletes.
- (c) Division III members abide by the following principles that help to define and distinguish the division and its policies and legislation.
  - (1) Student-Athlete Collegiate Experience.

- (i) Primarily focus on intercollegiate athletics as a four-year undergrad experience.
  - (ii) Seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of their educational experience.
  - (iii) Assure that student-athletes are supported in their efforts to meaningfully participate in nonathletic pursuits to enhance their overall educational experience.
- (2) Student-Athlete Athletics Experience.
  - (i) Support student-athletes in their efforts to reach the highest levels of athletics performance, with a primary emphasis on conference and regional competition, while providing access to national championships.
  - (ii) Prioritize the experience of the participants, and the internal constituency (e.g., students, alumni, institutional personnel) rather than on the entertainment needs of spectators or the general public.
  - (iii) Develop and maintain an environment that promotes sportsmanship and a positive culture for student-athletes, coaches, and administrative personnel, recognizing the role intercollegiate athletics can play in human development. Ensure spectators contribute to a positive sporting experience in support of all participants.
- (3) Member Responsibility and Oversight.
  - (i) Encourage participation and provide equitable opportunities with support for gender and ethnic/racial diversity. Give equal emphasis to men's and women's sports.
  - (ii) The administration of an institution's athletics program (e.g., hiring, compensation, professional development, certification of coaches) should be integrated into the campus culture and educational mission.
  - (iii) Assure all teams are provided with appropriate facilities, competent coaching, and competitive opportunities.
  - (iv) Assure student-athletes are treated similarly to the student-body in areas that include, but are not limited to, admissions, enrollment, financial aid, academic and career support, academic performance, and degree completion.
  - (v) Assure that financial aid is not awarded to any student on the basis of athletics leadership, ability, participation or performance.



## Division III Positioning Statement

**Follow your passions and discover your potential.** The college experience is a time of learning and growth. For Division III student-athletes, this happens most importantly in the classroom and through earning an academic degree. The Division III experience provides for participation in a competitive athletics environment. Student-athletes push themselves to achieve excellence and build upon their academic success with new challenges and life skills within an environment that fosters health and wellness. Student-athletes are encouraged to pursue the full spectrum of opportunities available during their time in college. In this way, Division III provides an equitable and inclusive environment for student-athletes to take responsibility for their own paths, follow their passions and discover their potential through a comprehensive educational experience.

## Division III Attributes

**Proportion:** appropriate balance of academics, athletics, and additional collegiate opportunities.

**Comprehensive Learning:** opportunity for broad-based education and success.

**Passion:** playing for the love of the game, competition, enjoyment, self-improvement, and our teammates and communities.

**Responsibility:** development of accountability through personal commitment and choice.

**Sportsmanship:** fair and respectful conduct toward all participants and supporters.

**Citizenship:** dedication to developing responsible leaders and global citizens.

## Reasons to Believe

**Comprehensive educational experience.** Division III institutions develop student-athlete potential through a holistic educational approach that includes rigorous academics, competitive athletics, and opportunities to pursue other interests and passions.

**Competitive athletic programs.** Student-athletes participate in an intense, competitive athletics environment. Student-athletes do not receive any monetary incentive (athletics scholarship) to play sports in college and play for a love of the game.

**Integrated campus environment.** A quarter of all Division III students participate in athletics. These student-athletes are integrated into the campus culture and educational missions of their institutions:

**Commitment to inclusive environments.** Division III prides itself on creating inclusive, diverse, and equitable environments for its student-athletes.

**Academic focus.** Student-athletes most often attend a Division III institution because of the excellent academic programs.

**Available financial aid.** 80% of all student-athletes in Division III receive some form of grant or non-athletics scholarship. Student-athletes have equal opportunity and access to financial aid as the general student body – but are not awarded aid based on athletics leadership, ability, performance, or participation. Without the obligation of an athletics scholarship, student-athletes can emphasize academics, athletics, and other opportunities of college life appropriate to the necessary commitment and their own passions.

**Commitment to athletics participation.** Division III institutions are committed to a broad-based program of athletics because of the educational value of participation for the student-athlete. The division averages 19 sports per institution; more than any other division. It also emphasizes integrating competitive men's and women's sports into higher education so that the educational experience of the student-athlete is paramount.

**National championship opportunities.** Division III has over 200,000 student-athletes competing annually in 37 different national championships. These competitions provide an opportunity for student-athletes to compete at the highest level and fulfill their athletics potential.

**NOTE:** Strategic initiatives are divided between championships and Enrichment Fund initiatives and programs. Most strategic initiatives support the Division III student-athlete experience. The strategic priorities are not listed in priority order; all are of equal value. **Text in red highlights key initiatives during year two of the 2024-26 biennium.**

## **DIVISION III STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2024-26 BUDGET BIENNIUM [YEAR 2: 2025-26]**

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**Maintain Fiscal Integrity.** All programs and budget priorities shall be managed in a manner that ensures they are fiscally responsible, sustainable and reflect the division's priorities. Further:

- Maintain and annually evaluate the divisional operating budget for the current budget cycle (2025-26).
- Continue to monitor the division's current mandated reserve.
- 1. **Provide Quality Division III Championships. FY26 budget equals \$37.5 million.** The Division III experience provides for participation in a competitive athletics environment, and Division III is committed to conducting quality championships with fair selection processes and appropriate access. Strategic priorities support student-athletes in their efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance, which may include opportunities for participation in national championships, by supporting institutions as they provide all teams with adequate facilities, competent coaching, and appropriate competitive opportunities. The Division III Championships Committee is responsible for continual assessment of policies and NCAA legislation related to the championships program including the appropriateness of bracket sizes, regional alignment and select criteria processes. Championship funding enhancements will start at the sport committee level with recommendations to the Championships Committee, endorsement to the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee and ultimate approval by the Management and Presidents Councils. **Incorporate approved FY26 budget enhancements (e.g., joint men's basketball championship, increased per diem, flexibility to protect highly ranked teams, livestreaming of preliminary rounds of NCAA team championships) and recommendations from the Deloitte consultant analysis. Budget plan for the next budget cycle (2026-28).**
- 2. **Provide Division III Conference Office Support. FY26 budget equals \$4.5 million.** These funds support the Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program, annual commissioner meeting with NCAA staff and a grant to support officiating resources.
  - The Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program is divided into five tiers.
    - Tier One: Professional Development and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee support. All institutions may annually access conference grant dollars to support campus and conference SAAC meetings, programs, and initiatives as well as professional opportunities for key constituent groups (e.g., senior woman administrators, staff and administrators of color, sports information directors, athletic trainers). Funding also is available to offset conference office travel. All conferences will optimally use the full allocation of funds each year.

- Tier Two: Student-Athlete Well Being Initiatives. Funds are available for a wide-variety of student-athlete well-being initiatives with an emphasis on programming related to diversity, equity and inclusion, academic experiences, identity and integration and sportsmanship initiatives.
- Tier Three: Technology and Officiating Improvement. Funding is available for conference offices to improve technology and support of officiating improvements.
- Tier Four: Funding is available to support the division's strategic priority of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the conference and/or institutional level.
- Tier Five: Third-Party Review. Aids conference offices to provide documentation of a third-party external review of grant fund usage to the national office annually.
- Continue to monitor divisional challenges with officiating, including the quality and pipeline of officials. Maintain funding, via the conference grant program, to enhance officiating, and evaluate additional grant funds provided for FY26.
- All conferences will be represented annually; commissioners will be provided with the opportunity to discuss Division III hot topics, governance, and championships issues. Additional funding is provided through Tier One of the Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program to supplement a portion the conference office's travel costs.

### 3. Effectively Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. FY26 budget equals \$2.7 million.

- Create partnerships and review the objectives and establish meaningful goals for the division's programs supporting equity and inclusion. Partner with Division III conferences and institutions to support innovative programs that promote inclusion.
  - Continue professional development and networking opportunities for underrepresented groups (e.g., SWA Program, Institute for Administrative Advancement, Student Immersion Program).
  - Continue to fund the Division III diversity grants – pathway to excellence, strategic alliance matching and coaching enhancement.
  - Support the office of inclusion in promoting resources for the athletics diversity and inclusion designee.
  - Support the Management and Presidents Council DEI subcommittee that absorbed the work of the LGBTQIA+ and Diversity and Inclusion Working Groups.
  - Continue to provide the LGBTQ OneTeam program that provides education to the membership on ways to create a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ individuals and allies. Maintain the annual LGBTQ of the Year awards. Continue to promote the LGBTQ non-discrimination policy guide.
  - Promote the Inclusive Leaders Program that provides education on improving the recruitment and retention of students of color.
- Establish strategies to increase and diversify the pool of candidates for Division III committee service and membership job searches.

- Maintain the division's database of underrepresented individuals that have participated in an NCAA program. Continue to send out a quarterly Diversity and Inclusion newsletter.
- Monitor NCAA emerging sports (e.g., triathlon, acrobatics and tumbling, stunt, flag football).
  - Monitor, with the office of inclusion and the membership, new emerging sports for women and specifically, vote on the women's flag football as an emerging sport and vote to establish a national collegiate championship for stunt and acrobatics and tumbling at the 2026 Convention.
- Ensure a gender equitable experience for all student-athletes.

**4. Ensure Student-Athlete Support. FY26 budget equals \$654K.**

- Maintain the promotion and use of the Injury Surveillance Program, SSI's data collection system, by the Division III membership.
- Continue to sponsor a regular and representative academic reporting program to compare the academic success of student-athletes and the general student body. Continue to emphasize the academic success of Division III student-athletes as compared to other students. Focus on solutions and best practices to address graduation rates of teams and demographic groups that are lower than their counterparts who do not participate in intercollegiate athletics. Maintain the annual student-athlete graduation rate submission.
- Maintain and enhance the partnership with the College Sports Communicators by providing professional development funding and opportunities (e.g., Emerging Elite Program, Division III Day at the CSC Convention and CSC Student Program), overseeing a recognition system awarded three times per year, and providing funds to support the Division III-specific Academic All-America program.
- Amplify the student-athlete voice. Collaborate with Division III SAAC to provide opportunities for effective student-athlete engagement and leadership.
- Fund student-athletes to attend the annual NCAA Student-Athlete Leadership Forum. The Forum is an opportunity for college athletes, coaches and administrators to collectively learn about themselves and grow as the next generation of leaders. Fund DISC assessments that are an important resource that institutions and conference offices use to help student-athletes, coaches and administrators learn more about their behavioral styles and how their individual styles come together in a team environment.
- Support Gameday the DIII Way, the Division III sportsmanship and game environment initiative. Promote existing tools and resources (e.g., facilitator training and on-line educational modules).
- Monitor and promote institutional commitment to the Board of Governor's policy on sexual assault violence prevention education and annual requirements.

- Continue to create specific programming for student-athletes attending the annual Convention to help better engage and educate on the Division III philosophy.
- Promote the division's mental health program, Mental Health First Aid training, that is available to all Division III institutions, at no charge, through August 2027. Support the Sport Science Institute's resources related to mental health. Codify the division's mental health pilot related to waivers for mental health into legislation.
- Promote sports wagering resources and research the opportunity to create a safe harbor for those seeking help to address problem gambling.

**5. Maintain the Value of Division III Athletics. FY26 budget equals \$335K.** The division continues to serve as a conscious alternative to the sport-specialization youth culture, and as an accessible and fulfilling educational and athletics destination. It also emphasizes a fuller, more integrated academic experience in all divisional endeavors.

- Communicate the distinct Division III philosophy as articulated in the Philosophy Statement and supported by the Strategic Positioning Platform.
- Emphasize, promote, and steward the Division III brand, identity, and unique philosophy as articulated in the division's Strategic Positioning Platform to prospective student-athletes and their families, guidance counselors and high school and club coaches. Support conferences and institutions to better tell the Division III story to a variety of internal and external target audiences with the following identity activation initiatives: Division III week, national and customizable videos. Maintain a recognition award for athletics communication directors to recognize outstanding work that tells the Division III story.
- Emphasize the values of Division III to effectively manage its membership growth. Maintain a cross-divisional governance staff and Membership Committee liaison group to monitor divisional membership issues.
- Monitor the federated process for Division III playing rules. Ensure communication between playing and sport rule committees and inform the membership of key rule changes to encourage feedback. Monitor new playing rules committee structures.
- Continue to support athletic trainers and factors impacting their hiring and retention. Provide institutional funding to offset athletic training costs. Assist with resources and professional development.
- Continue the strategic partnership with Special Olympics. Maintain the activity reporting program to better tell the partnership's story from a division-wide perspective.

- Continue to create specific programming for delegates attending the annual Convention (e.g., educational sessions, Issues Forum, and technology to support all sessions) to help better engage and educate the membership. Properly engage and educate the membership on legislative proposals.

**6. Provide Professional Development for Division III Constituents. FY26 budget equals \$602K.**

- **In partnership with the NCAA Executive Staff and divisional Association-wide governance staffs, enhance Division III specific presidential programming to educate and engage all Division III chancellors and presidents.** Continue to selectively forward issues of presidential importance to the division's presidents and chancellors. **Create a Division III specific engagement program.**
- Maintain in-person, full-day orientation programs for new athletics directors and commissioners to assist these individuals in understanding and promoting the division.
- Strengthen the advocacy of Division III faculty for the values of the athletics experience by offering annual professional development training and networking opportunities to FARs. Maintain the Faculty Advisory Group to provide quarterly updates to the Division III Management Council.
- Partnership with National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators. The governance structure will provide financial support to NADIII AA for its professional development offerings.
- The division will fund professional development opportunities for female athletics administrators in a manner most accommodating to applicant individuals (e.g., Women Leaders in Sports Institutes, SWA Program).
- Continue to maintain and enhance Division III University – an on-line learning management system. **Create and add new division-specific educational modules.**
- Support a day-long professional development program for the division's athletics communication and sports information directors in conjunction with the annual College Sports Communicators (CSC) Convention – DIII Day. Maintain the Emerging Elite Program to provide professional development to athletics communication staff. **Consider institutional grant funding, with the next budget cycle, to offset communication and technology costs.**
- Provide funding for the DIIICA and NADIII AA executive leadership groups to come to Indianapolis in Aug./Sept. to discuss current hot topics in Division III and plan communication strategies for the upcoming year. Emphasize communication, shared accountability, and collaboration in leading the division.
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of a live stream option for the annual Regional Rules Seminar to enhance compliance education.**

**7. Enhance Formal Accountability of the Governance Structure and National Office Support. FY26 budget equals \$78K.**

- Continue to distribute the annual performance scorecard to committee members for regular accountability of key Division III programs and committee staff liaisons.
- Monitor, and address as needed, the enrollment and related financial challenges within higher education, and the related challenges affecting the Division III membership. Monitor the impact on conference office stability and the impact of conference realignments.
- Continue to make membership communication a priority. Provide clear, concise, and consistent communication. Strengthen relationships with the leadership of the DIIICA and NADIIIAA. Provide effective transparency and opportunities for input in the work of governing bodies. Conduct a comprehensive review of communication initiatives and platforms to better identify and reach target audiences as well as streamline and improve efficiency.

**8. Support Association-wide initiatives.**

- Support the Association in its efforts to engage Congress to introduce federal legislation to address threats (e.g., Name, Image and Likeness, student-athlete compensation, select litigation).
- Monitor the implementation of the House settlement agreement and strategically plan for any impacts to the division.
- Support relevant issues identified through the Association's Business Review (e.g., fan database, purchasing collective, post-eligibility insurance) and couple with recommended opportunities identified by the Deloitte analysis.
- Monitor legal threats and cases against the Association and analyze and strategically plan for impacts to the division.
- Continue to partner with the Sport Science Institute regarding priority health and safety issues, including mental and physical health. Provide Division III representatives for on-going summits. Provide timely and consistent communication to the membership regarding new SSI interassociation guidelines and best practices.

**Appendix A**

**Division III Budget Justification**



| Projected NCAA Division III 2025-26 Budget Breakdown               |              | Division III Philosophy Statement and Constitutional Principles Justifying Funded Programs   |
|--|--------------|--|
| <b>Revenue:</b>  |              | <i>Division III Institutions....</i>   |
| Division III 3.18% Revenue   | \$46,057,953 |  |
| Additional Revenue   |              |  |
| Membership Dues  | NA for FY26  |  |
| <b>Championships Expenses:</b>                                     |              |  |
| Total Championships Operational Expenses                           | \$37,523,999 | Support student-athletes in their efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance, which may include opportunities for participation in national championships, by providing all teams with adequate facilities, competent coaching and appropriate competitive opportunities. (Division III Philosophy Statement – section r) |
| Total Championships Supplemental                                   | \$1,756,000  | Supports live stream production on ESPN+ (football, volleyball, basketball). Provides hosts of team championships a stipend to offset livestream costs. Supports maintaining livestreaming at no cost.   |
| <b>Conference Office Expenses:</b>                                 |              |  |
| Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program                     | \$4,376,703  | Place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators and place greater emphasis on the internal constituency (e.g., students, alumni, institutional personnel) than on the general public and its entertainment needs; (Bylaw 20.11-(b))  |
| Conference Commissioners/SID Meeting                               | \$40,000     | The purpose of the NCAA is to assist its members in developing the basis for consistent, equitable competition while minimizing infringement on the freedom of individual institutions to determine their own special objectives and programs. (Bylaw 20.11)   |
| Grant funding to support officiating resources                     | NA for FY26  | With the on-going crisis in the recruitment and retention of officials, this two-year grant will provide funding for the D3CA to establish relationships and build resources. All funding (\$40K) provided in FY25.  |
| <b>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Expenses:</b>                   |              |  |
| Pathway to Excellence Grant  | \$1,600,000  | Support underrepresented constituent groups; This two-year grant provides \$30K annually plus professional development.  |
| Strategic Alliance Matching Grant                                  | \$708,600    | Support underrepresented constituent groups; This five year grant provides 75% of the salary in year one; 50% in year two and 25% in year three. The recipient must fully fund the position for years four and five.   |
| Diversity. Equity and Inclusion Programs                           | \$275,000    | Support underrepresented constituent groups;   |
| Coaching Enhancement Grant   | \$100,000    | Support underrepresented asst. coaches. The two-year matching grant provides \$7,500 in salary and benefits and \$1,500 annually in professional development.  |
| LGBTQ Programming  | \$85,000     | Funding for the annual LGBTQ of the Year recognition (\$30K) and update the OneTeam Program. Partner with office of inclusion.   |
| <b>Student-Athlete Support Expenses:</b>                           |              |  |
| Mental Health First Aid  | \$930,000    | Through Aug. 2027 institutions may receive a one-time free mental health first aid training for 30 individuals.  |
| Student-Athlete Leadership Forum                                   | \$400,000    | Seek to establish and maintain an environment in which student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience, and in which coaches play a significant role as educators. (Bylaw 20.11)  |
| Convention Programming including specific student-athlete programs | \$100,000    | Continue to create specific programming for student-athletes attending the annual Convention to help better engage and educate on the Division III philosophy.   |
| Increased national SAAC committee                                  | \$45,000     | Provide funds to pay expenses for every conference to have a representative on national SAAC and attend two in-person meetings (NCAA Convention and the July national SAAC meeting).   |
| Division III Academic All-America (College Sports Communicators)   | \$44,000     | Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic program (preamble to philosophy statement).   |

| Projected NCAA Division III 2025-26 Budget Breakdown |                  |  |
|--|------------------|--|
| <b>Expenses, continued:</b>                          |                  |  |
| Campus Based Student-Athlete Leadership Programming  | \$20,000         | The purpose is to provide behavioral assessments to student-athletes, coaches and administrators. The assessment aids participants with understanding their individual behavioral styles and preferences, a common language when addressing these topics and methods to better relate to others. It also provides additional strategies to build more effective relationships on teams and in the workplace.       |
| CSC Student Program                                  | \$15,000         | Programming for students interested in sports information/athletics communication.   |
| <b>Value of Division III Expenses:</b>               |                  |  |
| Branding and Identity Initiatives                    | \$300,000        | These initiatives provide branding and promotion support in the form of PSA videos, championships webcasting enhancements and resources.   |
| Special Olympics Partnership                         | \$35,000         | Institutions seek to establish and maintain an environment in which student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience (preamble to philosophy statement).   |
| <b>Professional Development Expenses:</b>            |                  |  |
| Division III Health and Safety Grant                 | \$860,000        | Provide each institution a \$2,000 grant to offset athletic training expenses.   |
| Athletic Trainer Initiatives                         | \$85,000         | Resources to support the Division III Athletic Trainer Working Group recommendations.  |
| Emerging Elite Program                               | \$85,000         | Resources to support the professional development of athletics communication/sports information directors.   |
| FAR Institute  | \$75,000         | Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience (preamble to philosophy statement) |
| NADIII AA Partnership                                | \$75,000         | The purpose of the NCAA is to assist its members in developing the basis for consistent, equitable competition while minimizing infringement on the freedom of individual institutions to determine their own special objectives and programs. (Bylaw 20.11)   |
| New Athletics Director Orientation                   | \$70,000         | Create in-person, orientation programs for new athletics directors to assist with the knowledge, resources and philosophy of the division.   |
| Women Leaders Enhancement Grant                      | \$30,000         | Support ethnic and gender diversity for all constituents; (Bylaw 20.11-(p))  |
| Division III University                              | \$20,000         | Funding to create new modules for Division III University.   |
| New Commissioner Orientation                         | \$15,000         | Create in-person, orientation programs for new commissioners to assist with the knowledge, resources and philosophy of the division.   |
| CSC DIII Day   | \$12,000         | This initiative supports sports information directors to receive professional development.   |
| NADIII AA and D3CA leadership meeting                | \$10,000         | The executive leadership groups from NADIII AA and D3CA come to Indianapolis in Aug./Sept. to discuss current hot topics in Division III and plan communication strategies for the upcoming year.  |
| Misc. Division III Initiatives                       | NA               | This includes contracting costs, as well as money earmarked to support future initiatives.   |
| Conference Rules Seminar                             | Association-wide | The Association shall assist the institution in its efforts to achieve full compliance with all rules and regulations and shall afford the institution, its staff and student-athletes fair procedures in the consideration of an identified or alleged failure in compliance.   |
| <b>Division III National Office Expenses:</b>        |                  |  |
| Division III Cancellation Insurance                  | \$61,000         | Intercollegiate athletics programs shall be administered in keeping with prudent management and fiscal practices to assure the financial stability necessary for providing student-athletes with adequate opportunities for athletics competition as an integral part of a quality educational experience.   |
| Working Groups                                       | \$5,000          | This initiative exists to provide opportunities for working groups/task forces in the future.  |
| NCAA staff professional development                  | \$7,000          | Allows annual professional development for NCAA Division III staff.  |
| Total Division III Expenses                          | \$50,609,779     |  |

- \* The \$5 million event cancellation insurance protects the budget in case of a catastrophic event that would reduce or eliminate, for one year, the division's share of media rights revenue.
- \*\* Intentionally overspending the operating budget by approximately \$2.2 million to reduce the excess above and beyond the mandated reserve.
- \*\*\* Spending an additional \$4 million in supplemental spend (livestreaming preliminary rounds of team championships, mental health training, ESPN+ production, and grants to assist athletic trainers) to reduce the excess above and beyond the mandated reserve.

## **Appendix B**

### **History of the Division III Strategic Plan and Budget Policies**

## History

The original Division III strategic plan was unveiled in 1998 as the division embarked on its new federated structure. The Division III Management Council Strategic Planning Subcommittee developed the framework for the plan with broad participation of the Presidents Council, Division III and Association-wide committee structure, and the Division III membership. The 2004 version of the Division III Strategic Plan was developed by a joint subcommittee of the Management and Presidents Councils consistent with the Association-wide Strategic Plan adopted by the NCAA Executive Committee in April 2004. The 2004 plan contained many of the existing initiatives and priorities to ensure that the programs and results remain consistent with Division III objectives. However, significant changes occurred as the 2005 and 2006 plans linked the relationship to the Division III philosophy with each Association-wide goal and outlined a series of outcome measures for each goal. Another significant change occurred in 2006-07 as the Division III Strategic Initiatives Grant Program resources were funneled directly to Division III Conferences and the Association of Independents. With this change, many strategic initiatives previously administered at the NCAA national office moved to the local control of conferences and institutions. The localized program encourages collaboration and involvement of all Division III constituent group representatives in the planning, decision-making and accountability of programming and funding to achieve the goals established in the Division's Strategic Plan. Presidential oversight and accountability with the process and budget allocations, consistent with the legislated leadership role of presidents within conference governance, is paramount.

In 2008-09, the strategic plan underwent a format change to create a forward-looking document that highlights the goals and expectations of a budget biennium. Much of the reporting done in previous plans was moved into a Division III Annual Report, and standard committee operations are now reflected in each committee's policy and procedure guide (available on each committee's home page on [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org)). The plan clearly articulates the division's funding priorities, and explains when an initiative is funded by Division III, and when it is funded by a broader Association-wide budget. The plan also includes an appendix to show the philosophical or constitutional justification for all programs funded with Division III dollars.

In 2009-10, the plan was updated to highlight the division's near-term strategic priorities. Most 2009-10 priorities resulted from a series of presidentially authored white papers on membership growth published in September 2008. For 2010-12, the plan was updated based on the Division's release of a Strategic Positioning Platform, and clearly defined the near- and medium-term goals the division needed to accomplish to be successful in embodying the platform.

For 2012-15, the plan was updated to reflect the Association's move to a three-year budget cycle.

After the 2012-15 budget cycle, the plan returned to a two-year budget cycle and emphasizes budget accountability and management.

With the start of the budget cycle in 2021, the Councils approved a one-time, three-year budget cycle (2021-24) to align with the current CBS/Turner broadcast agreement that ends in 2023-24. In FY25, the division will return to its two-year budget cycle as well as adjust its mandated reserve policy from 50% of the annual revenue to a flat 15 million annually in addition to a five million event cancellation insurance policy.

In 2022, the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee recommended a new format for the strategic plan that better reflects the division's commitment to the student-athlete experience.

### **Division III Budget Policies**

The Division will maintain the following budget policies. SPFC must recommend, with final approval from the Management and Presidents Councils, to change the policies.

- The division will have a two-year budget cycle unless a specific request by SPFC to alter.
- The budget will reflect the annual spend on championships and the Enrichment Fund with a priority on enhancing the student-athlete experience (approximately 80% of the budget annually will fund the division's 28 national championships).
- Only consider new budget enhancements in the last year of a current budget cycle unless SPFC determines there is extenuating circumstances.
- Annual mandated reserve that is 50% of the annual revenue through FY24. In FY25, the mandated reserve moved to a flat \$15 million.
- Annually evaluate the need to purchase \$5 million in event cancellation insurance.

### **Division III Budget Initiatives (in priority order)**

- a. Contractual obligations.
- b. Championships.
  - (1) Bracketing.
  - (2) Per diem allotment.
  - (3) Experience funding.
    - (a) Game operations (e.g., travel, officials, web streams, marketing, etc.).
    - (b) Student-athlete experience (e.g., trophies, mementos, banquets, etc.).
- c. Conference strategic initiatives grant.
- d. Diversity grants.
- e. Enrichment Fund programs.



### **Division III Budget Guidelines and Principles**

In accordance with NCAA Constitution Article 3 (finance), Division III is guaranteed revenue through allocations made to each division from the Association's general operating revenue; and Division III shall receive at least 3.18% of the Association's annual general operating revenue, as agreed on January 9, 1996.

The NCAA Division III Presidents Council, Management Council and Strategic Planning and Finance Committee are committed to developing budgetary principles/guidelines that are reflective of the NCAA mission and principles and the Division III philosophy, strategic positioning platform and strategic plan. These principles/guidelines will be used to guide any deliberations that may occur related to the potential use of funds allocated to Division III.

These principles/guidelines include the following:

1. The Division III budget shall operate on a biennial budget timeline to ensure a manageable approach to proposed adjustments. A biennial budget allows the division to make strategic decisions versus immediate reaction to items brought forth by the committees and keeps the division in alignment with the long-range budget determined for the division. The Strategic Planning and Finance Committee shall, however, have the ability to address items related to gender equity or health and safety brought forth outside of the normal budget process, and recommend any such items to the Management and Presidents Councils, which allows the division to address any immediate budget needs that may come forth between budget proposal years.
2. The budget will reflect the annual spend on championships and the Enrichment Fund with a priority on enhancing the student-athlete experience (approximately 80% of the budget annually will fund the division's national championships).
3. The Division III mandated reserve maintain a balance of at least 15 million plus an event cancellation insurance policy. The balance shall include the prior year's cash reserve and the current year's budget surplus.
4. Decisions regarding whether a budget request needs to be made outside of the biennial budget cycle should be made in consultation with necessary subject matter experts (e.g., Office of Inclusion, Sports Science Institute).
5. Budget decisions will be made to support the Division III strategic priorities including, but not limited to, national championships, conference office support, diversity, equity and inclusion, student-athlete support, professional development programs, initiatives and resources and support of Association-wide and Division III membership initiatives.
6. As budget discussions occur and decisions are made, funding Division III national championships will remain a priority to ensure a quality championship experience for Division III student-athletes.
7. To limit an institution's expenses for participating in a Division III

championship, as prescribed by the Division III Championships Committee's policies and procedures and ensure consistent transportation and per diem guidelines for all Division III championships.

8. Division III championship policies will reflect an overall cost-containment philosophy supporting initiatives, such as geographic proximity. For purposes of these budget principles, cost containment encompasses the efficient and cost-effective operation of Division III championships that aligns with the division's commitment to provide a quality championship experience for student-athletes.
9. The Division III Championships Committee shall initially approve any budget request from a sports committee. Sport committees should collaborate where appropriate across genders when making requests. The Championships Committee's review process of budget request(s) should ensure that any gender difference across sports is necessary, appropriate, and equitable. All requests will go to the Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee and Management Council. The Division III Presidents Council shall have final approval.
10. The Division III Administrative Committee shall address issues in light of any unexpected event(s) to determine the use of Division III insurance and reserve dollars. As needed, the Administrative Committee will seek input from the Division III Presidents Council.
11. Division III budget initiatives (in priority order):
  - a. Contractual obligations.
  - b. Championships.
    - (1) Bracketing.
    - (2) Per diem allotment.
    - (3) Experience funding.
      - (a) Game operations (e.g., travel, officials, web streams, marketing, etc.).
      - (b) Student-athlete experience (e.g., trophies, mementos, banquets, etc.).
  - c. Conference strategic initiatives grant.
  - d. Diversity grants.
  - e. Enrichment Fund programs.

12. The division (including colleges, universities, and conferences) shall commit to fiscal responsibility at the local, conference, regional and national levels and that the division shall be accountable for spending NCAA Division III dollars in a fiscally responsible manner. To that end, the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee has the authority to audit dollars allocated to Division III institutions and conferences from the Division III budget, including, but not limited to, conference grant funding and sports sponsorship requirements of Division III member conferences. It also includes establishing regular reporting requirements for one-time funds and funds used for on-going initiatives and programs.
13. The division will attempt to avoid funding special interests of various segments of the Division III membership or items that may be more an institution's or conference's responsibility than that of the Association or the division.
14. Division III will follow the Association's request for proposal (RFP) process when the division has specific vendor relationships and/or consultant needs.
15. These budget principles will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee, Management Council and Presidents Council and modified as necessary to ensure that they are reflective of the Division III philosophy, strategic positioning platform and strategic plan. The Presidents Council has ultimate authority to approve the modifications to these guidelines and principles.

*Approved August 5, 2024, by the Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee, Management Council and Presidents Council.*



# Division III Strategic Plan

2024-26 Budget Biennium **[Year 1: 2024-25 – Final Analysis]**

**Vision Statement:** Division III will be a dynamic and engaging group of colleges, universities and conferences of varying sizes and missions committed to an environment that encourages and supports health and safety, diversity, values, fairness, and equity, and places the highest priority on the overall educational experience of its student-athletes in the conduct of intercollegiate athletics.

**Mission Statement:** Promoting the student-athlete academic and athletic experience, with a commitment and dedication to the membership through effective inclusion, communication, and engagement.



**DIVISION III**  
**DISCOVER | DEVELOP | DEDICATE**

**NOTE:** Strategic initiatives are divided between championships and Enrichment Fund initiatives and programs. Most strategic initiatives support the Division III student-athlete experience. The strategic priorities are not listed in priority order; all are of equal value. **Text in red highlights key initiatives during year one of the 2024-26 biennium. Blue indicates progress/completion of the initiative.**

## **DIVISION III STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2024-26 BUDGET BIENNIUM [YEAR 1: 2024-25]**

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**Maintain Fiscal Integrity.** All programs and budget priorities shall be managed in a manner that ensures they are fiscally responsible, sustainable and reflect the division's priorities. Further:

- Maintain and annually evaluate the divisional operating budget for the current budget cycle (2024-2025).
  - Continue to monitor the division's current mandated reserve.
1. **Provide Quality Division III Championships. FY25 budget equals \$36.3 million.** The Division III experience provides for participation in a competitive athletics environment, and Division III is committed to conducting quality championships with fair selection processes and appropriate access. Strategic priorities support student-athletes in their efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance, which may include opportunities for participation in national championships, by supporting institutions as they provide all teams with adequate facilities, competent coaching, and appropriate competitive opportunities. The Division III Championships Committee is responsible for continual assessment of policies and NCAA legislation related to the championships program including the appropriateness of bracket sizes, regional alignment and select criteria processes. Championship funding enhancements will start at the sport committee level with recommendations to the Championships Committee, endorsement to the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee and ultimate approval by the Management and Presidents Councils. **Incorporate approved FY25 budget enhancements (e.g., per diem, bracket increases, flexibility to protect highly ranked teams, officiating fees, livestreaming of preliminary rounds of NCAA team championships) and recommendations from the Deloitte consultant analysis. ACCOMPLISHED.**
  2. **Provide Division III Conference Office Support. FY25 budget equals \$4.5 million.** These funds support the Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program, annual commissioner meeting with NCAA staff and a grant to support officiating resources.
    - The Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program is divided into five tiers.
      - Tier One: Professional Development and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee support. All institutions may annually access conference grant dollars to support campus and conference SAAC meetings, programs, and initiatives as well as professional opportunities for key constituent groups (e.g., senior woman administrators, staff and administrators of color, sports information directors, athletic trainers). Funding also is available to offset conference office travel. All conferences will optimally use the full allocation of funds each year.
      - Tier Two: Student-Athlete Well Being Initiatives. Funds are available for a wide-variety of student-athlete well-being initiatives with an emphasis on programming related to diversity, equity and inclusion, academic experiences, identity and integration and sportsmanship initiatives.

- Tier Three: Technology and Officiating Improvement. Funding is available for conference offices to improve technology and support of officiating improvements.
- Tier Four: Funding is available to support the division's strategic priority of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the conference and/or institutional level.
- Tier Five: Third-Party Review. Aides conference offices to provide documentation of a third-party external review of grant fund usage to the national office annually.
- **Incorporate recommendations recommended by Lewis Rice consultant outside review to increase efficiencies. ACCOMPLISHED.** Programs now have consistent marketing, nomination processes, and participant feedback processes.
- **Continue to monitor divisional challenges with officiating, including the quality and pipeline of officials. Maintain funding, via the conference grant program, to enhance officiating, and evaluate additional grant funds provided for FY25 and FY26. ACCOMPLISHED.** Successfully implemented a new officiating initiative (RefQuest) and funded a partnership between the commissioners and NASO to enhance officiating.
- All conferences will be represented annually; commissioners will be provided with the opportunity to discuss Division III hot topics, governance, and championships issues. Additional funding is provided through Tier One of the Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program to supplement a portion the conference office's travel costs.

### 3. Effectively Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. FY25 budget equals \$2.8 million.

- Create partnerships and review the objectives and establish meaningful goals for the division's programs supporting equity and inclusion. Partner with Division III conferences and institutions to support innovative programs that promote inclusion.
  - Continue professional development and networking opportunities for women and individuals of color (e.g., SWA Program, Institute for Administrative Advancement, Student Immersion Program). **Incorporate recommendations from the Lewis Rice consultant review. ACCOMPLISHED.**
  - Continue to fund the Division III diversity grants – ethnic minority and women, strategic alliance matching and coaching enhancement. **Incorporate recommendations from the Lewis Rice consultant review. ON-GOING.** Renamed the Ethnic Minorities and Women's Internship Grant to the Pathways to Excellence Grant. With new federal and state executive orders continue to evaluate programs, grants and initiatives that support under-represented groups.
  - Support the office of inclusion in promoting resources for the athletics diversity and inclusion designee.
  - **Create a new Management and Presidents Council subcommittee to absorb the work of the LGBTQIA+ and Diversity and Inclusion Working Groups. ACCOMPLISHED.** Created the Division III DEI Subcommittee.
  - **Update the LGBTQ OneTeam program and train new facilitators.** The program provides education to the membership on ways to create a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ individuals and allies. Maintain the annual LGBTQ of the Year awards. Continue to promote the LGBTQ non-discrimination policy guide. **ACCOMPLISHED.** Updated the program and trained a new cohort of facilitators in Dec. 2024.
  - Promote the Inclusive Leaders Program that provides education on improving the recruitment and retention.

- Establish strategies to increase and diversify the pool of candidates for Division III committee service and membership job searches.
  - Maintain the division's database of all women and individuals of color that have participated in an NCAA program. Continue to distribute and promote Continue to send out a quarterly Diversity and Inclusion newsletter.
- Monitor NCAA emerging sports (e.g., triathlon, acrobatics and tumbling, flag football).
  - Monitor with the office of inclusion and the membership new emerging sports for women and specifically, vote on the creation of a women's wrestling championship at the 2025 Convention. ON-GOING. The membership adopted women's wrestling as a national collegiate championship. The council has sponsored a 2026 proposal to support women's flag football as an emerging sport. The council will consider a request from the Committee on Women's Athletics to sponsor a 2026 proposal to establish a national collegiate championship for the sports of stunt and acrobatics and tumbling..
- Review the recommendations from the NCAA's gender equity report – Phase II and continue to ensure a gender equitable experience for all student-athletes.

#### 4. Ensure Student-Athlete Support. FY25 budget equals \$625K.

- Maintain the promotion and use of the Injury Surveillance Program, SSI's data collection system, by the Division III membership.
- Continue to sponsor a regular and representative academic reporting program to compare the academic success of student-athletes and the general student body. Continue to emphasize the academic success of Division III student-athletes as compared to other students. Focus on solutions and best practices to address graduation rates of teams and demographic groups that are lower than their counterparts who do not participate in intercollegiate athletics. Maintain the annual student-athlete graduation rate submission.
- Maintain and enhance the partnership with the College Sports Communicators by providing professional development funding and opportunities (e.g., Division III Day at the CSC Convention and CSC Student Program), overseeing a recognition system awarded three times per year, and providing funds to support the Division III-specific Academic All-America program.
- Amplify the student-athlete voice. Collaborate with Division III SAAC to provide opportunities for effective student-athlete engagement and leadership.
- Student-athlete leadership forums and campus-based leadership programming. Fund student-athletes to attend the annual NCAA Student-Athlete Leadership Forum. The Forum is an opportunity for college athletes, coaches and administrators to collectively learn about themselves and grow as the next generation of leaders. Fund DISC assessments that are an important resource that institutions and conference offices use to help student-athletes, coaches and administrators learn more about their behavioral styles and how their individual styles come together in a team environment. Incorporate recommendations from the Lewis Rice consultant review. ACCOMPLISHED.

- Support Gameday the DIII Way, the Division III sportsmanship and game environment initiative. Promote existing tools and resources (e.g., facilitator training and on-line educational modules). Promote that championship handbooks include Gameday language. **ACCOMPLISHED.** Developed an online module to provide de-escalation training for the membership.
- Monitor and promote institutional commitment to the Board of Governor's policy on sexual assault violence prevention education and annual requirements.
- Provide funding for national Student-Athlete Advisory Committee associate members to attend an in-person national SAAC meeting at the NCAA Convention and during the summer.
- Continue to create specific programming for student-athletes attending the annual Convention to help better engage and educate on the Division III philosophy.
- Support the Sport Science Institute's resources related to mental health. Maintain a pilot related to waivers for mental health. Incorporate recommendations from the Deloitte analysis. **ACCOMPLISHED.** In March, signed an agreement through Aug. 2027 to provide Mental Health First Aid, at no cost, to all Division III institutions. The council is considering a request from the Division III Student-Athlete Reinstatement Committee to adopt legislation to codify the mental health waiver.

**5. Maintain the Value of Division III Athletics. FY25 budget equals \$335K.** The division continues to serve as a conscious alternative to the sport-specialization youth culture, and as an accessible and fulfilling educational and athletics destination. It also emphasizes a fuller, more integrated academic experience in all divisional endeavors.

- Communicate the distinct Division III philosophy as articulated in the Philosophy Statement and supported by the Strategic Positioning Platform.
- Emphasize, promote, and steward the Division III brand, identity, and unique philosophy as articulated in the division's Strategic Positioning Platform to prospective student-athletes and their families, guidance counselors and high school and club coaches. Support conferences and institutions to better tell the Division III story to a variety of internal and external target audiences with the following identity activation initiatives: Division III week, national and customizable videos. Maintain a recognition award for athletics communication directors to recognize outstanding work that tells the Division III story. **ON-GOING.** Implemented mandatory live streaming for all team championship hosts. Approx. 75 million minutes watched and 2 million unique viewers.
- Emphasize the values of Division III to effectively manage its membership growth. Maintain a cross-divisional governance staff and Membership Committee liaison group to monitor divisional membership issues.
- Monitor the federated process for Division III playing rules. Ensure communication between playing and sport rule committees and inform the membership of key rule changes to encourage feedback. **ACCOMPLISHED.** Management Council created a subcommittee to participate in the process. The membership adopted legislation to allow the council to exempt the division from a new common playing rule that has a financial or philosophical impact on the division. The council has approved a process to implement this legislation. Participating in a broad review of playing rule committee structures.

- Support an Athletic Trainer Working Group to identify the factors impacting Division III's efforts to hire and retain athletic trainers and to create recommendations to help institutions address those identified factors. Release recommendations to the membership. Provide institutional funding to assist with resources and professional development. **ACCOMPLISHED.** Recommendations released in the fall of 2024. Implemented a health and safety grant (\$2,000) per institution to offset athletic training costs for FY25 and FY26.
- Continue the strategic partnership with Special Olympics. Maintain the Monthly Spotlight Poll and activity reporting program to better tell the partnership's story from a division-wide perspective.
- Continue to create specific programming for delegates attending the annual Convention (e.g., educational sessions, Issues Forum, and technology to support all sessions) to help better engage and educate the membership. Properly engage and educate the membership on legislative proposals.

**6. Provide Professional Development for Division III Constituents. FY23 budget equals \$602K.**

- In partnership with the NCAA Executive Staff and divisional Association-wide governance staffs, enhance Division III specific presidential programming to educate and engage all Division III chancellors and presidents. Continue to selectively forward issues of presidential importance to the division's presidents and chancellors.
- Maintain in-person, full-day orientation programs for new athletics directors and commissioners to assist these individuals in understanding and promoting the division.
- Strengthen the advocacy of Division III faculty for the values of the athletics experience by offering annual professional development training and networking opportunities to FARs. Maintain the Faculty Advisory Group to provide quarterly updates to the Division III Management Council.
- Partnership with National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators. The governance structure will provide financial support to NADIII AA for its professional development offerings.
- The division will fund professional development opportunities for female athletics administrators in a manner most accommodating to applicant individuals (e.g., Women Leaders in College Sports Institutes, SWA Program).
- Continue to maintain and enhance Division III University – an on-line learning management system. **Create and add new division-specific educational modules. ACCOMPLISHED.** AMA released new modules in Aug. 2024 and anticipate additional modules in Aug. 2025.
- Division III Day. Support a day-long professional development program for the division's athletics communication and sports information directors in conjunction with the annual College Sports Communicators (CSC) Convention. **Develop a new program to provide professional development to athletics communication staff. Update the Strategic Communications resource. ACCOMPLISHED.** In Dec. 2024, Division III held the inaugural Emerging Elite Program and created a working group to update the Strategic Communications resource. Anticipate releasing the updated resource in June 2025.

- Provide funding for the DIIICA and NADIIIAA executive leadership groups to come to Indianapolis in Aug./Sept. to discuss current hot topics in Division III and plan communication strategies for the upcoming year. Emphasize communication, shared accountability, and collaboration in leading the division.
- Provide a live-stream option for the annual Regional Rules Seminar to enhance compliance education. The live-stream will not replace the once in three-year in-person requirement.

**7. Enhance Formal Accountability of the Governance Structure and National Office Support. FY23 budget equals \$88K.**

- Continue to distribute the annual performance scorecard to committee members for regular accountability of key Division III programs and committee staff liaisons.
- Monitor, and address as needed, the enrollment and related financial challenges within higher education, and the related challenges affecting the Division III membership. Monitor the impact on conference office stability. **ON-GOING.** Conference realignments continue to occur, and the governance structure will collaborate with the membership to identify ways to minimize the need for realignments, if appropriate.
- Continue to make membership communication a priority. Provide clear, concise, and consistent communication. Strengthen relationships with the leadership of the DIIICA and NADIIIAA. Provide effective transparency and opportunities for input in the work of governing bodies. Conduct a comprehensive review of communication initiatives and platforms to better identify and reach target audiences as well as streamline and improve efficiency. **ACCOMPLISHED.** In the fall of 2024, surveyed the membership regarding live stream capabilities, and using a survey by College Sports Communicators to update the Division III Communication Strategies resource (due June 2025).

**8. Support Association-wide initiatives.**

- Support the Association in its efforts to engage Congress to introduce federal legislation to address threats (e.g., Name, Image and Likeness, student-athlete compensation, select litigation). **ON-GOING.** With a change in presidential leadership, there have been more House and Senate hearings, coupled with legal threats, it dictates a need to continue to engage federal legislators on NCAA needs (preemptive state laws, anti-trust protections and confirmation that student-athletes are not classified as institutional employees).
- Support relevant issues identified through the Association's Business Review (e.g., fan database, purchasing collective, post-eligibility insurance) and couple with recommended opportunities identified by the Deloitte analysis. **ON-GOING.** Used the NCAA Fan Database successfully with select sports (field hockey and men's ice hockey). Promoting the NCAA's post-eligibility insurance to support student-athletes and the NCAA purchasing cooperative to provide savings to institutions.

- Continue to partner with the Sport Science Institute regarding priority health and safety issues, including mental and physical health. Provide Division III representatives for on-going summits. Provide timely and consistent communication to the membership regarding new SSI interassociation guidelines and best practices.
- Collaborate with the Office of Inclusion to update “The Diverse Workforce”, a resource to assist institutions and conference offices to diversify its athletics searches. **NOT ACCOMPLISHED.** With the recent federal executive orders, the NCAA has paused this initiative.