



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION III STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MARCH 25, 2024, MEETING**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

- None.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Welcome and review of agenda.** Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee Chair Joanne Berger-Sweeney welcomed the group and called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. Eastern. President Berger-Sweeney previewed the agenda and welcomed the four new committee members.
2. **Division III financial analysis update.** The Deloitte consultants joined the meeting to provide an update on their review to date of the division's finances based on interviews with multiple Division III stakeholders and data and research analysis. The Division III Presidents Council previously authorized the review to identify financial priorities, threats, and opportunities to improve revenue growth, and make recommendations to reduce risk and strengthen the division's overall financial position. Deloitte shared identified opportunities, including budget impact and revenue potential, and noted it also will provide a playbook to implement the opportunities and address potential threats later this spring. The findings will help inform the SPFC's final budget recommendations in June.
3. **Report from the November 15, 2023, videoconference.** The committee approved the report from its November 15, 2023, videoconference as presented.
4. **Presidents Council/Management Council Summary of Actions.** The committee reviewed the summary of actions from the January Division III Presidents and Management Council meetings, noting the approval of the request to pause the annual Division III membership dues assessment (\$1,100 for institutions and \$550 for conferences) for two years (2024-25 and 2025-26) to help alleviate the financial burden many Division III institutions and conferences are experiencing during a challenging economic period that is affecting higher education.
5. **Division III Philosophy Statement.** The committee reviewed the current Division III Philosophy Statement to guide its work during this meeting and noted that the newly revised philosophy statement adopted at the 2024 NCAA Convention will become effective August 1, 2024.
6. **SPFC policies and procedures.** The committee reviewed its policies and procedures document, which details the committee's composition (12 members), length of term (usually four years), role of the committee chair, committee responsibilities, meeting procedures, and the Division III budget policies.
7. **Division III budget guidelines and principles.** The committee also reviewed a newly drafted document outlining the Division III budget principles to guide deliberations related

to the potential use of funds allocated to Division III. The committee offered feedback and suggested that the Division III Championships Committee review the document as well, since many of the principles are related to championships funding. The committee will review an updated version during its June meeting and pending council approval, it may be shared more broadly (e.g., with Division III governance and sport committees) to help ensure transparency in the division's fiscal decision-making processes.

**8. Division III budget.**

- a. **2023-24 budget-to-actuals.** The committee reviewed the current budget-to-actuals through February.
- b. **Future budget projections.** The committee also reviewed the future forecast, noting that last year the division spent \$4 million more on championships to enhance the student-athlete experience and \$1.1 million more with Enrichment Fund initiatives to intentionally spend down dollars above and beyond the mandated reserve. The division also received \$1.3 million in additional, unexpected revenue from Association-wide championships, which will be used for future spends. In FY24, the division will intentionally overspend its budget by approximately \$3 million, including the \$800,000 previously approved to increase per diem a year early and \$935,000 to support one-time Enrichment Fund and financial analysis reviews and championships initiatives (i.e., the division's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary).

The forecast also notes the division's approval to suspend the membership dues assessment for FY25 and FY26 (approximately \$500,000 in each year) and produce women's volleyball, and men's and women's basketball semifinal and championships games with the new ESPN contract (approximately \$500,000 annually).

The committee noted that this future forecast will play a larger role when members discuss how to continue reducing the amount above and beyond the mandated reserve. The discussion will involve additional Enrichment Fund one-time and multi-year spend options, as well as championships budget enhancements.

**9. Division III Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program.**

- a. **Level II audits.** The committee reviewed results from the Level II audits conducted for three conferences in 2022-23 as mandated by NCAA Association-wide policy.
- b. **Conference Grant Review Subcommittee members, and grant policies and procedures.** Staff updated the committee on members who have been appointed to the subcommittee and changes to the grant policies and procedures document,

which has been updated to reflect procedures implemented if a conference falls into restricted status. The committee endorsed the changes.

10. **Enrichment Fund review.** The committee discussed potential Enrichment Fund enhancements to inform its broader budget discussion. [Attachment A].
  - a. **Conference Grant – Tier 1 proposal.** The Conference Grant Subcommittee of the Division III Commissioners Association (DIIIICA) requested the current allocation from Tier One allowed for conference office staff (commissioners, assistant commissioners and sports information directors) travel and professional development change from no more than 25% of the conference's Tier One total to a flat amount for all conferences. The request is based in part on the fact that conference offices have similar responsibilities regarding travel and opportunities for professional development that are independent of the size of the conference. The recommendation to move away from the 25% threshold to a flat rate would provide all conferences with equal funding to support their conference office staff as well as professional development opportunities for various campus constituents. The budget impact from this request would be \$126,000 annually.
  - b. **College Sports Communicators proposal.** College Sports Communicators (CSC) has requested funding for three components: (1) new professional development programming for athletics communication personnel; (2) expanding the existing program for student-athletes; and (3) a sponsorship for the CSC's career center initiative. The costs would be \$85,000 for the programming and \$7,500 for the sponsorship each year. The stated goal of the request is to help populate the pool of athletics communication personnel and provide development opportunities to retain those individuals.
  - c. **Officiating proposal.** The Division III Commissioners Association requested a one-time spend of \$40,000 to collaborate with the National Association of Sports Officials and the NCAA national office to provide developmental resources to improve officiating.
  - d. **Health and safety proposal.** This request comes from an interest within the membership to subsidize health and safety resources to help reduce institutional expenses. The proposal identifies four possible resources for the membership (as identified by the Sport Science Institute and Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports Administrative Committee). The committee will revisit this discussion during its June videoconference. Funding for this request would come as a supplemental spend and not as part of the division's operating budget.
  - e. **Regional Rules Seminar livestreaming update.** Staff provided an update regarding the Division III Membership Committee's discussions about

recommending future livestreaming options for the annual Regional Rules Seminar. The Division III Administrative Committee has already approved \$45,000 to provide a livestreaming option for this year's Regional Rules Seminar, but the Membership Committee is discussing whether this should be a future request for the 2025-26 biennium and may submit a formal proposal for the SPFC to consider during its June videoconference.

11. **Championships enhancement priorities.** The committee reviewed reports from the Championships Committee's February 5-6 in-person meeting and March 19 videoconference and noted the request of the SPFC to consider several championship enhancements for the 2025-26 biennium. These enhancements will be included in the committee's broader discussion regarding budget recommendations for the next budget cycle. [Attachment B]
12. **Division III brand discussion.** The committee noted feedback consistently received from the membership over the past several years indicating a desire to amplify the Division III brand. Staff presented various proposals for initiatives that might accomplish this intent and provide individuals not familiar with Division III a better insight into what the division represents and the quality of the student-athlete experience at Division III institutions. The initiatives include a short form video software to accommodate institutional fan bases and a web streaming initiative to promote championship preliminary rounds. The SPFC engaged in preliminary discussion regarding these initiatives and noted they will factor into the broader budget discussion later in this agenda and during the committee's next meeting in June.
13. **Division III Financial and Risk Management Working Group update.** The committee reviewed reports from the working group's most recent meetings as informational, noting that much of the working group's progress was addressed during the presentation from the Deloitte representatives in Informational Item 2.
14. **Enrichment Fund evaluation update.** The Lewis Rice consultants joined the meeting to update the committee on the evaluation of the Division III Enrichment Fund. The firm has completed Phase I and II interviews with Division III stakeholders related to the division's programs and diversity grants and has reviewed additional requested data and information. It will conduct Phase III (conference grant program) interviews in mid-April. The goals of the review are to assess whether the division's grants and programs have identified objectives, and if the objectives are being met. Further, the consultants will analyze if the grants and programs align with the division's strategic priorities. The consultants noted that a final report is expected later this spring.
15. **Review of 2024-25 budget recommendations.** The committee considered the championships enhancements presented earlier and agreed to support them in concept, recognizing that all recommendations have received thorough vetting through multiple membership surveys and discussion within the governance structure. The committee also

agreed to support, in concept, the requests for new initiatives within the Enrichment Fund in the operating budget (not the one-time or supplemental spends), acknowledging that the committee may modify the details of these requests before making its final recommendations during its June meeting. [See Attachments A and B]

The committee then discussed philosophically how to manage the current dollars above and beyond the mandated reserves to provide a guideline for finalizing its recommendations in June. While the SPFC did not settle on a targeted amount, members agreed it would not be prudent to simply grow the division's excess indefinitely.

The committee acknowledged two important factors: (a) Not all the data needed to make an informed decision are at the committee's disposal at this time. By June, the committee will have the final report from Deloitte regarding the recommendations for generating additional revenue and the startup costs associated with those initiatives; and (b) Some of the Enrichment Fund enhancement requests have a discretionary funding amount, and the committee has already expressed a desire to modify a few of the other requests to better meet intended outcomes. Accordingly, the committee agreed that reaching a consensus during this meeting was not reasonable, though the discussion regarding the philosophy behind managing the division's reserves was extremely helpful to inform future discussions.

The committee believes it will have the necessary information by its June videoconference and will be able to determine final budget recommendations. For now, the committee is satisfied with supporting, in concept, the known championships and Enrichment Fund enhancements and acknowledging that a placeholder amount will be necessary to accommodate the Deloitte recommendations and potential one-time supplemental spend [See items 10d and 12].

16. **Division III strategic priorities.** The committee reviewed a document listing the Division III national office staff's areas of emphasis and priorities for 2024 based on feedback from the membership and the governance structure. Committee members offered feedback, particularly based on the budget discussions to ensure those align with the strategic priorities.
17. **Division III Enrichment Fund initiatives with a budget impact.** The committee reviewed and received updates regarding the following Enrichment Fund programs, noting that all receive positive feedback from participants and the membership in general:
  - a. **Student Immersion Program.** Staff reviewed the Student Immersion Program participant feedback and budget from the 2024 program that occurred during the NCAA Convention.
  - b. **ADR professional development.** Staff reviewed the ADR budget and participant feedback from the 2024 program that occurred during the NCAA Convention.

- c. **Inclusive Leaders Program.** Staff reviewed the Inclusive Leaders roster, agenda and feedback from the 2024 facilitator program that occurred during the NCAA Convention.
  - d. **New Commissioner Orientation.** Staff reviewed the New Commissioner Orientation roster, agenda, and feedback from the program.
  - e. **FAR Orientation.** Staff reviewed the FAR Orientation roster and agenda from the program held in February.
  - f. **New Athletics Director Orientation.** Staff reviewed the New AD Orientation agenda and roster for the program scheduled to occur in June in conjunction with the NACDA convention.
  - g. **Institute for Administrative Advancement.** Staff provided an update on the Institute for Administrative Advancement scheduled to occur in June in conjunction with the NACDA convention.
  - h. **LGBTQ recognition award program.** Staff summarized the fourth annual LGBTQ of the Year award celebration that occurred at the NCAA Convention.
18. **Future meeting dates.** The committee will next convene via videoconference June 20, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Eastern.
19. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m. Eastern time.

*Committee Chair: Joanne Berger-Sweeney, Trinity College (Connecticut).*

*Staff Liaisons: Louise McCleary, Division III Governance*

*Bill Regan, Division III Governance*

*Mark Aiken, Administrative Services*

*Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs*

NCAA Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee March 25, 2024, Meeting	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Jeff Abernathy, Alma College, (via videoconference).	
Joanne Berger-Sweeney, Trinity College (CT).	
Stephanie Dutton, United East Conference.	
Michael Harrison, Framingham State University.	
Charley Jacobs, St. Norbert College.	
Muthu Meenakshisundaram, University of Minnesota, Morris.	
Joe Onderko, Presidents' Athletic Conference.	
Nick Pieart, Lake Forest College.	
Adam Puckett, George Fox University.	
Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University	
Shanna Trone, Agnes Scott College.	
Lawrence Ward, Babson College.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
None.	
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>	
Maggie Fletcher, Deloitte.	
Kat Harwood, Deloitte.	
Sarah Mullen, Lewis Rice.	
Brad Wachler, Lewis Rice.	
<b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>	
Mark Aiken, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan and Ali Teopas Spungen.	
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>	
Gary Brown (via videoconference), Eric Hartung, Katie Mucci, Laura Peterson-Mlynski, and Lisa Rogers.	