

REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MARCH 26, 2026, MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and review of agenda.** The chair, Suzanne Davis, welcomed the group and called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Eastern time. Committee members introduced themselves, including new members Jessica Chapin, director of athletics at Brandeis University; Crystal Gibson, director of athletics and recreation at St. Mary's College of Maryland and vice chair of the Division III Management Council; and Shannon Howley, associate director of athletics at Montclair State University and chair of the Division III Championships Committee.
2. **Review of recent report.** The committee approved the report from its November 10, 2025, videoconference as presented.
3. **SPFC policies and procedures.** The committee approved an updated version of its policies and procedures document with edits that reflect broader Association-wide policy changes regarding committee composition.
 - **SPFC meeting cadence proposal.** Based on the committee's workload and the significance of the issues it is considering, the committee agreed to increase its annual meeting frequency by adding one videoconference, resulting in three videoconferences (June, September and December) and the one in-person meeting in March. This cadence assures the SPFC will meet prior to the Management and Presidents Councils' quarterly meetings.
4. **Presidents Council/Management Council summary of actions.** The committee reviewed the summary of the Division III Presidents and Management Council meetings during the January Convention, noting the councils' approval of the SPFC recommendation to continue pausing the Division III membership dues assessment through FY27.
5. **Division III Analysis.** The committee received an update and engaged in discussion regarding the comprehensive analysis of Division III authorized by the Presidents Council to help the division's membership navigate the evolving landscape of higher education and intercollegiate athletics. The analysis focuses on identified tensions such as championship access, eligibility standards, playing and practice seasons, and governance processes. The Presidents Council approved a representative working group to coordinate the analysis, and Deloitte, which consulted on the division's financial analysis in 2024, was retained to assist in this analysis as well. The 19-member working group, which is chaired by Albertus Magnus College President Marc Camille and includes SPFC members Jessica Chapin and Joe Onderko, conducted its first videoconference earlier this week and will meet in person in April. Its charge is to:

- Codify Division III's distinctive core commitments, experiences, and values, particularly those currently under stress;
- Analyze internal tensions and external pressures that threaten Division III values;
- Identify, develop, and propose actionable solutions within the current structure to reinforce the division's values;
- Recommend governance or structural reforms, as necessary, to strengthen alignment between the current Division III governance structure or decision-making process to address pressing challenges and advance Division III values; and
- Propose any additional structural or legislative recommendations needed to strengthen and sustain the core values, philosophical tenets, rules and legislation, and governance structure and processes of Division III for long-term viability.

The analysis is a collaborative endeavor that will engage Division III stakeholders throughout the process, including the governance structure and the membership at large. Accordingly, SPFC members urged that the review be structured so that all Division III members feel they've had the opportunity for their voice to be heard. Members also emphasized that the purpose of the analysis is to further unify, rather than divide, the Division III membership and protect and enhance the attributes and characteristics that make the Division III experience unique.

6. **Presidents Council Futures Subcommittee report.** The committee reviewed the report from the subcommittee's February videoconference, which focused primarily on components of the Division III Analysis and the working group cited in Item 5 above. The subcommittee also expressed support for a new initiative to engage and educate senior campus leaders such as presidents/chancellors and athletics direct reports. The proposed initiative will be shared with Presidents Council during its April videoconference, and if approved, will begin in the fall of 2026.
7. **Strategic priorities.** The committee reviewed a document that highlights the division's strategic priorities. The document summarizes the work of the Division III national office staff to support the division's governance structure priorities, and outlines staff's engagement with committees to provide support and timelines to allow the governance structure to move strategic priorities from concept to implementation.
8. **Division III budget.**
 - a. **2025-26 budget-to-actuals.** The committee reviewed the budget-to-actuals through the end of February.
 - b. **Future budget projections.** The committee revisited the projections reviewed during its summer meeting, noting that the new FY26 budget is approximately \$1.5

million more than FY25 budget due to the NCAA's broadcast agreements and an increase in championships ticket sales. Also included on the projection is the division's annual contribution the Presidents Council authorized as part of the Ray settlement.

9. **Championships enhancement priorities.** The committee received an update on the Championships Committee's discussions during its February meeting regarding the next biennial budget cycle, including the budget requests from Division III sport committees. Among items being considered are initiatives to increase per diem, including the establishment of a high-cost city per diem; bracket expansion for select championships with increased sports sponsorship; the continuation of live streaming stipends for NCAA championships host sites; and increases for officiating. The Championships Committee will review these requests in more detail during its June meeting and submit final recommendations accordingly for the SPFC to evaluate during its June videoconference. The SPFC will then forward its recommendations for the Management and Presidents Councils to consider during their summer meetings. The new two-year budget cycle begins September 1.
10. **Enrichment Fund enhancement priorities.** The committee reviewed potential funding for the following existing or new Enrichment Fund initiatives in preparation for its June meeting when it will make final FY27 and FY28 budget recommendations to the Management and Presidents Councils.
 - a. **Athletics communications annual grant.** The Division III Athletics Communications Strategic Guide Working Group has asked to create an annual \$2,000 grant for FY27 and FY28 to support campus athletics communicators. The grant would be similar to the current Division III health and safety grant. SPFC members agreed this initiative is warranted and indicated initial support.
 - b. **Photography proposal.** The Division III Sports Information Directors Association is asking for assistance from the NCAA to fund photography support for Division III championship final sites by increasing the number of days photographers are at the finals site and enabling them to live-transmit photos for more immediate access. The proposal includes options that would provide a range of coverage (including the number of photographers on site and the number of days they spend at the championship, as well as their ability to live-transmit images). SPFC members understand the breadth of the need but are sensitive to the annual budget impact and the limited benefit for the membership, at large, with funding initiatives for team championships. Accordingly, the committee asked to see a modified proposal at its June meeting that would address the primary need of adding photographer days and live transmitting at individual team championships (e.g., track and field, golf, tennis) where there is broader membership participation. The committee believes this approach could provide a financial "middle ground" that would

enhance photo coverage at the championships and ease the burden on sports information directors.

- c. **Division III Commissioners Association proposals.** The DIIICA is seeking financial assistance to help offset the increased expenses tied to conference website hosting and maintenance. The committee discussed the proposal at length and asked for more information about the traffic conference websites receive as compared with their member school websites in order to better evaluate the proposal's return on investment. The DIIICA also is submitting a one-time funding request to support its partnership with the National Association of Sports Officials, which the SPFC generally supports.
 - d. **NADIIIAA grant proposal.** Division III provides an annual grant to the National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators for professional development. The organization is asking for an additional \$37,500 annually to support leadership and mentoring initiatives for new athletics directors. SPFC members initially supported the request.
 - e. **Regional Rules Seminar live streaming.** Now that the Division III Membership Committee has adopted a policy allowing institutions to meet their once-in-the-three-year attendance requirement to the Regional Rules Seminar by attending in person or watching the live stream, the committee was asked to earmark funds (approximately \$30,000 annually) to pay for the live stream. The committee was generally supportive of the request.
 - f. **Health and safety grant.** Last year and this year, the division has provided grants of up to \$2,000 to help offset athletic training expenses. The SPFC will consider in June if it wants to extend the grant for the FY27 and FY28 budget cycle. The cost is \$860,000 annually. Last year, approximately 75% of institutions applied for the grant.
 - g. **Mental Health First Aid.** The committee was reminded that the division has committed \$930,000 for this year and next year to support mental health first aid training. The program ends in August 2027.
 - h. **FY27/FY28 Enrichment Fund requests.** The committee reviewed a summary of Enrichment Fund expenses that include the items above in order to evaluate the overarching Enrichment Fund budget.
11. **Future budget projections with FY27/28 enhancements.** The committee reviewed a document that incorporates the proposed championship and Enrichment Fund spending for FY27 and FY28. The document indicates that the division has enough revenue to cover the proposed funding, but due to current one-time spends, including the division's financial contribution to the Ray settlement, it will also reduce the available reserves beyond the mandated policy.

12. **Division III Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program.** The committee finalized the members of the conference grant review subcommittee. It also approved the conference grant policies and procedures and reviewed the outcomes of the conference grant audits, noting the conferences randomly selected for a level two review had no issues.
13. **Championships live streaming update.** The committee received a summary of the live streaming analytics from the fall championships.
14. **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:
 - Faculty Athletics Representative Institute.
 - Senior Woman Administrator Program.
 - Emerging Elite Program.
 - Student Immersion Program.
 - Athletic Direct Report Professional Development.
 - New Athletics Directors Orientation.
 - Institute for Administrative Advancement.
 - College Sports Communicators Student Program.
18. **Future meetings.** The committee will convene via videoconference on a date in June to be determined.
19. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m. Eastern time.

Committee Chair: Suzanne Davis, Greenville University
Staff Liaison(s): Louise McCleary, Division III Governance and Member Services
 Bill Regan, Division III Governance and Member Services
 Cara Hubert, Administrative Services
 Jeff Myers, Division III Governance and Member Services

Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee March 26, 2026, Meeting
Attendees:
Jessica Chapin, Brandeis University.
Suzanne Davis, Greenville University.
Crystal Gibson, St. Mary's College of Maryland.
Michael Harrison, Framingham State University (via videoconference).
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University.
Carolyn Ringer Lepre, Salisbury University.
Angel Mason, Berry College.
Joe Onderko, Presidents' Athletic Conference (via videoconference).
Meghan Roman, Illinois College.
Luana Batista Soares, University of Massachusetts Boston.
Chris Spells, University of California, Santa Cruz.
Shanna Trone, Agnes Scott College.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor (via videoconference).
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Cara Hubert, Louise McCleary, and Bill Regan.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Grace Hadlich (via videoconference), Eric Hartung, Bryn Mangold, Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Lisa Rogers and Ali Spungen.