



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

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 15, 2023, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative Items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative Items.

- **Division III membership assessment.**

- a. Recommendation. That the Division III Management and Presidents Councils approve pausing the annual Division III membership dues assessment (\$1,100 for institutions and \$550 for conferences) for two years (2024-25 and 2025-26).
- b. Effective date. Immediate; only for 2024-25 and 2025-26.
- c. Rationale. During its discussion of the future budget projections and ways in which the division can accomplish its goal to reduce the amount beyond the mandated reserve over the next two fiscal years, the committee agreed to recommend pausing the membership dues assessment for 2024-25 and 2025-26. Per policy set by the NCAA Board of Governors, all NCAA member institutions and conferences annually pay dues to be members of the Association (\$900 per institution and \$450 per conference). At the 2016 NCAA Convention, Division III adopted an additional assessment of \$1,100 per Division III institution and \$550 per Division III conference to help fortify the Division III operating budget. However, given the desire to spend down the amount above the mandated reserve and to help alleviate the financial burden many Division III institutions and conferences are experiencing during a challenging economic period that is affecting all of higher education, the committee believes pausing the assessment for two years is appropriate.

While the committee acknowledges that the Management and Presidents Councils are the final authority in this matter, the committee encourages that the recommendation be approved, as doing so would not only be a gesture of goodwill toward the membership, but also help achieve the division's goals without jeopardizing the division's long-term financial health.

The committee also acknowledges the recommendation would apply only for the next two years, and that it would be clearly communicated to the membership that the assessment would resume beginning in 2026-27.

- d. Estimated budget impact. Division III institutions would experience a cost savings for the next two years (\$1,100 per year for institutions and \$550 per year for conferences). The pause would result in half a million less in annual revenue for fiscal year 2025 and FY 2026.
- e. Student-athlete impact. The budget savings over the next two years may result in programs and initiatives that support student-athletes at the campus and conference levels.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and review of agenda.** Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee chair Jim Troha welcomed the group, previewed the agenda and called the videoconference to order at 1:01 p.m. Eastern time.
2. **Review of recent report.** The committee approved the report from its June 22, 2023, videoconference as presented, noting the committee's support at that time of the revised Division III Philosophy Statement that the Division III Presidents Council subsequently agreed to sponsor for the 2024 NCAA Convention.

Relatedly, staff notified the committee that prior to the November 1 deadline for the membership to submit amendments-to-amendments, two conferences submitted amendments to the proposed philosophy statement. The first amendment proposes to retain language from the current philosophy statement regarding the focus of Division III athletics being primarily on the four-year undergraduate experience. The second amendment proposes retaining the language from the current philosophy statement about not awarding financial aid based on athletics leadership participation, ability or performance.

The committee did not discuss the merits of either amendment, though staff encouraged members to submit comments before the Convention if desired.

3. **Strategic Planning and Finance Committee policies and procedures.** The committee reviewed and approved the policies and procedures that have been established for the committee going forward. The committee agreed to review these annually at its November meeting.
4. **Presidents Council/Management Council Summary of Actions.** The committee reviewed the summary of actions from the Division III Presidents and Management Council October meetings, noting in particular the report-outs pertaining to discussions and actions the committee took during its June videoconference.

5. **Division III budget.**

- a. **2023-24 budget facts and figures.** The committee reviewed this year's facts and figures as information.
- b. **Final 2022-23 and current 2023-24 budget-to-actuals.** The committee reviewed the final report from 2022-23 and the current budget-to-actuals for 2023-24 through the end of October.
- c. **Future budget projections.** The committee also reviewed the projections, 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. The division also received \$1.3 million in additional, unexpected revenue from Association-wide championships. These funds will be used for future spends.

In FY 2024, the division will intentionally overspend its budget by approximately \$4.8 million, which includes 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., 50th anniversary, broadcasting the women's basketball championship). The goal is to continue reducing the amount above the mandated reserve.

6. **Division III membership dues.** Related to the review of future budget projections noted in Item 5-c, the committee discussed additional ways to spend down the amount above the mandated reserve. Among the ideas was to pause the Division III membership assessment approved at the 2016 Convention for two years (2024-25 and 2025-26) to help achieve the division's goals and to provide monetary relief to institutions and conferences during an economically challenging period. After discussing the matter at length, the committee supported recommending that the Division III Management and Presidents Councils consider approving this two-year pause. (See Action Item 2 above.)
7. **Division III Strategic Positioning Platform.** The committee reviewed the division's strategic positioning platform updated in August 2021 that serves as a branding guide for internal and external audiences. As the division has worked collectively to navigate and manage the various risks and pressures facing intercollegiate athletics in general over the past few years, discussions have percolated within the Division III membership and the Division III Management and Presidents Councils regarding whether the division should enhance its branding efforts. The committee agreed to review the platform in-depth during its in-person meeting in March to determine whether it should be revised and/or whether the platform should target additional audiences that the division hasn't focused as much on in the past (e.g., high school guidance counselors, club sport programs, parents of prospective student-athletes, etc.).

8. **Enrichment Fund review update.** The committee noted that the Division III Presidents Council formally approved funding for an external party to conduct an evaluation of the Division III Enrichment Fund. As the division plans for its next two-year budget cycle, the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee will continue reviewing the Enrichment Fund programs and initiatives and will rely on the outside vendor's evaluation to assist in that regard. The evaluation is expected to be completed by June 2024. The committee also will continue discussing potential Enrichment Fund one-time spends at its March meeting. Initial ideas centered on athletic trainer professional development, mental health resources (e.g., telehealth app, mental health training), athletics communication professional development, officiating support, and enhancing webcasting of NCAA championships.
9. **Division III Financial and Risk Management Working Group update.** The committee reviewed reports from the working group's July, September, and October meetings, noting that the Presidents Council approved the working group's recommendation to hire a third-party vendor to conduct a financial analysis. Staff noted that requests for proposals were distributed and that finalists have been selected for interviews in the coming weeks. The working group intends to provide an update to the membership during the 2024 NCAA Convention and expects the review to be completed by the summer of 2024.
10. **NCAA post-eligibility insurance program update.** NCAA Controller David Lafiosca joined the committee to provide an update on efforts to implement the post-eligibility insurance program coverage the NCAA Board of Governors approved for all NCAA student-athletes beginning Aug. 1, 2024. The coverage will be for two years after student-athletes complete their college athletics experience and will cover injuries that occur while playing for their school. The NCAA has established a [website](#) to provide ongoing updates to the membership regarding how to navigate this new process.
11. **Championships budget enhancement priorities.** Staff updated the committee on a membership survey distributed in late October designed to obtain additional input regarding how to prioritize the potential enhancements previously identified (increasing access to championships through larger brackets in select sports, including football; increasing per diem to mitigate costs for participating institutions; and providing sport committees the flexibility to add flights to avoid pairing highly ranked teams within a region). The survey also asks whether the three-week period devoted to championships other than football is appropriate; whether capping brackets for sports other than football at 64 is appropriate; and whether Pools B and C should be combined as one collection of at-large selections. Responses are due November 17. The Division III Championships Committee will use this feedback to help inform final budget recommendations during its February meeting that will be submitted to the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee for consideration in March.
12. **Division III Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program.** Staff reviewed the three conferences selected for an audit in 2023, per NCAA policy. The committee also reviewed

recent changes to the Strategic Initiatives Conference Grant Program policies and procedures as information.

13. **Division III Enrichment Fund initiatives with a budget impact.** The committee received updates regarding the following initiatives: New Athletics Director Orientation, Institute for Administrative Advancement, College Sports Communicators Student Program, Senior Woman Administrator Program, Student Immersion Program and Athletics Direct Report Professional Development. The committee heard that the feedback from these programs consistently indicate that participants value the opportunity and believe the programs enhance their professional development.
14. **Division III strategic priorities.** The committee received a document detailing and monitoring progress on the Division III national office staff's management of areas of emphasis and priorities for the 2023-24 academic year based on feedback from the membership and within the governance structure. The committee agreed to review the document in more detail during its March meeting.
15. **Additional business.** President Troha recognized the committee members whose terms on the committee are expiring. The other committee members joined President Troha in acknowledging the departing members' outstanding contributions during their terms. President Troha also noted that this also his final meeting, as he is transitioning to serve as chair of the Division III Presidents Council beginning with the close of the 2024 NCAA Convention. Joanne Berger-Sweeney will become the chair of the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee at that time.
16. **Future meeting dates.** The committee will hold an in-person meeting in March 2024 on a date to be determined. The committee also will conduct a videoconference in June 2024 on a date to be determined.
17. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m. Eastern time.

Committee Chair: Jim Troha, Juniata College, Landmark Conference

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 November 15, 2023, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Jeff Abernathy, Alma College, Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.	
Joanne Berger-Sweeney, Trinity College (CT), New England Small College Athletic Conference.	
Michael Harrison, Framingham State University, Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference.	
Charley Jacobs, St. Norbert College, Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference.	
Jim Troha, Juniata College, Landmark Conference.	
Shanna Trone, Agnes Scott College, Collegiate Conference of the South.	
Michelle Walsh, Vassar College, Liberty League.	
Lawrence Ward, Babson College, New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference.	
Absentees:	
Stephanie Dutton, United East Conference.	
Chuck Mitrano, Empire 8.	
Adam Puckett, George Fox University, Northwest Conference.	
Sabienea Winston, Geneva College, Presidents' Athletic Conference.	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
Mark Aiken, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan and Ali Spungen.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Gary Brown, Jemma Cota, David Lafiosca, Chelsea Lamberty and Lisa Rogers.	