



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION III MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE  
MARCH 21, 2024, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

- **Legislative items.**
  1. **Noncontroversial Legislation – Amend the applications deadline date from January 15 to February 1.**
    - a. **Recommendation.** That the Division III Management Council approve in concept noncontroversial legislation to amend the applications deadline for the exploratory year, provisional membership and reclassification of membership from January 15 to February 1.
    - b. **Effective date.** August 1, 2024.
    - c. **Rationale.** Moving the application deadlines to February 1 relieves an administrative burden on all involved parties. For institutions completing the application, it alleviates any issues with completing the required applications around the end-of-year holidays. Additionally, the change would not impact the business of the Division III Membership Committee; the February 1 applications deadline would still allow the committee to review the application materials in a timely manner.
    - d. **Estimated budget impact.** None.
    - e. **Student-athlete impact.** None.
  2. **Noncontroversial Legislation – Amend the new member application process.**
    - a. **Recommendation.** That the Division III Management Council approve in concept noncontroversial legislation to amend the new member application process by incorporating the current exploratory year waiver criteria into the legislated standards for the provisional membership application. The standards include:
      - (1) Invitation to a Division III multisport conference.
      - (2) Viability statement.
      - (3) Letter of recommendation.
      - (4) Functioning compliance system.
      - (5) Meet minimum sport-sponsorship requirements in the year preceding the first year of provisional membership.

- (6) No athletically related financial aid awarded to any student-athlete. The institution must attest to full compliance with Bylaw 15 (financial aid) beginning with the first year of provisional membership.

If the standard is not met or the Membership Committee denies the provisional membership application, the institution is required to complete the exploratory year. If the standard is met and the Membership Committee approves the provisional membership application, the institution maintains the option to complete the exploratory year.

- b. **Effective date.** August 1, 2024.
- c. **Rationale.** This proposal allows institutions that meet established standards to bypass the exploratory year and begin the provisional membership process. Currently, an institution can apply for the exploratory year and then, if meeting the criteria, apply for a waiver of the exploratory year to move directly into the three-year provisional membership process. This proposal incorporates the waiver criteria into legislated standards and establishes a clearer standards-based approach to the provisional membership process.
- This change has the potential to streamline the transition of an institution into a multi-sport conference while not decreasing the standards or the length of the three-year provisional membership process.
- d. **Estimated budget impact.** None.
- e. **Student-athlete impact.** The potential for an enhanced student-athlete experience resulting from a streamlined membership transition into a multi-sport conference (e.g., scheduling of contests, potential access to conference post-season competition).

#### INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** The committee commenced business at 1 p.m. Eastern.
2. **Membership Committee roster and conflict of interest.** Committee members were reminded of the NCAA Conflict of Interest Policy and proper procedures for recusal if a conflict of interest might arise. Committee members reviewed the roster and conflict of interest documentation and updated, as necessary.
3. **Review policies and procedures.** The committee reviewed the policies and procedures documents.

4. **Review of February meeting reports.** The committee reviewed its February 26 and 29, 2024, videoconference reports.
5. **Consideration of future funding to livestream Division III sessions at the NCAA Regional Rules Seminar.** The committee recommended the Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee allocate \$50,000 each year to livestream Division III sessions at the NCAA Regional Rules Seminar in 2025 and 2026. The committee believes a virtual option provides an invaluable educational tool to those in the Division III membership unable to travel to seminars. Additionally, the committee confirmed that its attendance policy will continue to be satisfied only with in-person attendance at either an NCAA Regional Rules Seminar or conference rules seminar.
6. **Review of athletics consortium legislation.** The committee began its review of potential concepts to update the athletics consortium legislation. The concepts considered the evolving nature of consortiums, while also attempting to ensure the criteria are clear and provide for consistent review of future requests. The committee directed staff to seek feedback from the Division III Management Council on the criterion requiring the institutions to be neighboring. Additionally, feedback was requested on academic consortiums comprised of an NCAA member institution with graduate-level institutions or community colleges. The committee will continue its review at future meetings.
7. **Discussion of the new member process.**
  - a. **Presidents and chancellors' attendance at the NCAA Convention.** The committee approved a change to its NCAA Convention attendance policy for presidents and chancellors at institutions in the new member process. The committee will now require the president or chancellor to attend one time during the first year of the provisional or reclassification process; there is no longer a requirement for an institution in the exploratory year to attend the NCAA Convention. The committee directed staff to update the New Member FAQ and other educational materials to reflect this change.
  - b. **Championships selection criteria.** The committee recommended the Division III Championships Committee consider a change to the championships selection criteria related to Provisional and Reclassifying members. [Attachment A.]
  - c. **Reclassification three-year provision.** The committee reviewed the three-year requirement for institutions seeking to reclassify to Division III and supported the establishment of a waiver to shorten the process to two years [Attachment B]. The committee directed NCAA staff to seek feedback on the concept from the Division III Management Council for the committee to review prior to considering a formal recommendation.

8. **Future meeting schedule.** The committee reviewed its future meeting schedule.
9. **Other business.** NCAA staff provided the committee with an update on a Division III institution that announced a merger with a Division II institution. Staff will provide the committee with additional information at a future meeting.
10. **Adjournment.** The committee concluded its business and adjourned 3:04 p.m. Eastern.

*Committee Chair:* Corey Borchardt, Upper Midwest Athletic Conference  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Eric Hartung, Division III Governance  
 Brittany Higgins, Academic and Membership Affairs  
 Sarah Turner, Academic and Membership Affairs

<b>NCAA Division III Membership Committee March 21, 2024, Videoconference</b>
<b>Attendees:</b>
Corey Borchardt, Upper Midwest Athletic Conference.
Doug Chin, Great Northeast Athletic Conference.
Frederick Clark, Bridgewater State University.
Greg Cooper, Heidelberg University.
Christine Hagedorn-Nordenholt, Rosemont College.
Wayne Lewis, Houghton University.
Miriam Merrill, Pomona-Pitzer Colleges.
Chris Roekle, Coast-to-Coast Conference.
William Stiles, Alvernia University.
<b>Absentees:</b>
Lillian Case, Juniata College. (SAAC representative).
Kim Fierke, State University of New York at Oneonta.
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>
None.
<b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>
Eric Hartung, Brittany Higgins and Sarah Turner.
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>
Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Joan Nissen, and Lisa Rogers.



## **Provisional and Reclassifying Institutions as Part of Championships Selection Criteria**

### **Background.**

Per Division III Championships Committee policy, institutions in year one and year two of the new member process do not count towards Division III championships criteria for their opponents. This policy was established, in part, because these institutions are potentially competing with student-athletes receiving athletics scholarships. Current Division III bylaws allow for new members to phase-out athletics scholarships in the first and second year of the process.

Membership Committee requests Championships Committee consider the recommendation below. The recommendation establishes a standards-based approach to determine when an institution can count for championships selection criteria. The review of the institution will ensure checks and balances. A change also creates incentive for conferences to bring in new members and include them in conference schedules, which enhances the student-athlete experience at the institutions in the new member process.

### **Recommendation.**

Amend the Division III championships selection criteria to allow provisional and reclassifying institutions to count towards Division III championships criteria for their opponents beginning in the academic year following the institution's attestation of full compliance with Division III bylaws. This includes the institution attesting that no student participating in athletics has been awarded athletically related financial aid and their policies and procedures for administering the student financial aid program comply with Bylaw 15. As part of the provisional/reclassifying application or the year one annual report, the institution will undergo a Level II review by the Division III Financial Aid Committee where the committee evaluates compliance with Bylaw 15 and communicate their findings to the Division III Membership Committee and Championships Committee.



## Consideration of Establishing a Waiver of the Reclassification Three-Year Provision

### Background.

Division III Bylaw 20.6.4 states that, “Reclassifying membership shall not be less than a three-year period. At the end of the three-year period, a reclassifying member shall be eligible for active membership.” There is currently no waiver opportunity to shorten the three-year provision.

Division III Bylaw 20.6.5 requires all reclassifying members to be in compliance with all Division III bylaws with the exception of Bylaw 15.3 (Financial Aid). While reclassifying members are prohibited from awarding new athletically related financial aid, the institution may continue to provide previously awarded athletically related financial aid to student-athletes for the first two years of the three-year process. In the third year, any students who remain on athletically related financial aid may no longer participate in intercollegiate athletics. In this scenario the reclassifying member is in compliance with all Division III bylaws in the third year of the process.

Currently, reclassifying institutions are held to the same standard (e.g., the prohibition on athletically related financial aid, sports sponsorship) as institutions that received the exploratory year waiver and subsequently begin the three-year provisional membership process. The potential recommendation below establishes a different standard for Division I and Division II institutions when they seek reclassification to Division III. It provides these institutions the opportunity to waive the third year of the three-year process as outlined below.

### Potential recommendation.

Establish a waiver of Bylaw 20.6.4 (Three-Year Provision) to shorten the provision from three years to two years given the following criteria:

- a. The waiver would be requested in conjunction with the submission of the year two annual report.
- b. A reclassifying member shall administer its athletics program in accordance with all Division III bylaws.
- c. **Athletically Related Financial Aid Exception:** A reclassifying member shall not award athletically related financial aid to incoming students (e.g., freshmen, transfers) beginning with the first year of the reclassification process and thereafter. Following the completion of year one, a reclassifying member may no longer award athletically related financial aid to any student, unless the institution previously awarded athletically related financial aid to the student, and the student no longer participates in intercollegiate athletics. The reclassifying member must comply with all financial aid requirements set forth in Bylaw 15. During the second year of reclassification, a reclassifying member must complete the Division III financial aid electronic reporting process and Level II Review by the Financial Aid Committee.

### **Implementation.**

The reporting of student financial aid data by a reclassifying institution takes place in September of the second year, capturing the institution's financial aid awarding from the previous academic year. The Level I and II Reviews by the Division III Financial Aid Committee would be completed by February of the second year and the institution notified of the review outcome at that time. If the Level II review resulted in the finding of compliance with Bylaw 15, the institution would then have the option to request the waiver of the three-year provision in conjunction with the submission of their year two annual report to the Division III Membership Committee by June 1. The committee would then consider the annual report and waiver request at the June meeting, and the decision communicated to the institution shortly thereafter. If the annual report and the waiver request are approved, the institution would begin active Division III membership September 1 of that same year.