



REPORT OF THE NCAA DIVISION III
STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAAC)
JANUARY 13-14, 2025, MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Administrative items.

- a. **Roster.** The committee reviewed and updated its current roster.
- b. **Expectations of a SAAC member.** The committee reviewed the expectations of SAAC primary and associate members, and effective strategies to engage with conference and campus SAAC groups.
- c. **November 10-11, 2024, meeting report.** The committee approved the report with no changes.
- d. **Review policies and procedures.** The committee reviewed its policies and procedures.
- e. **Roberts Rules of Order.** The committee reviewed the Robert's Rules of Order guidelines document.

2. Division III and Association-Wide Committees and Subcommittee updates.

- a. **NCAA Division III and Association-Wide Committees.** The committee representatives who serve on Division III committees and Association-wide committees provided updates on the most recent meetings and reports.
 - **Division III Nominating Committee.** The committee representative discussed the process in which the committee will review nominations for SAAC in the event proposal 2025-1 passes. If adopted, all associate members would roll off and the committee would seek nominations for those respective conferences. The committee noted they would like to review the nominations received and submit a ranking (including male/female/ethnic minority representation) to the Nominating Committee to ensure SAAC meets the proper composition.
- b. **Association-Wide Subcommittee updates.** The committee representatives who serve on Association-wide subcommittees provided updates on the most recent meetings and reports.

3. 2025 NCAA Convention.

- a. **2025 Convention Legislation.** The committee reviewed the 2025 official notice, legislative proposals, and the corresponding question and answer guide before continuing its discussion on the committee's position on each proposal. The committee then rehearsed the position papers and made any necessary edits on site.

- **Emergency Legislation.** The committee reviewed the emergency legislation regarding the transfer regulations and certification after one term of enrollment. The committee discussed its position and noted it would be in support of ratification.
- b. **Convention Logistics.** The committee reviewed the Convention schedule for the committee and delegates, including the student social mixer, joint breakfast, SAAC-sponsored student-athlete luncheon and the Special Olympics event.
 - **Unified Sports Activity.** On Wednesday, January 15, Division III SAAC sponsored a Special Olympics activity in partnership with Special Olympics Tennessee. The activities at the event included a photo booth, dance floor, friendship bracelet station and cornhole. There were 12 Special Olympic athletes in attendance and over 200 delegates.
- 4. **NCAA national office updates.**
 - a. **Division III Update.** The committee received updates from Division III Vice President Louise McCleary and Division III Managing Director Bill Regan on a variety of current topics facing Division III including NCAA Power Index, championship brackets, livestreaming of championships, fan database, sports betting and the Mental Health First Aid programming. The leadership of the division discussed the current legal landscape and challenges facing the association while noting that although much of the focus is on Division I, Division III will continue to monitor for potential impact.
 - b. **NCAA update with President Charlie Baker.** President Baker answered a variety of questions from the committee and engaged in conversation regarding sports betting, congressional engagement, NIL and the impact of collectives, the decline in collegiate enrollment, and legal challenges facing the Association.
 - c. **NCAA Sport Science Institute Update.** Dr. Deena Casiero, Chief Medical Officer and Anne Rohlman, director of the Sport Science Institute, discussed the deregulation of professional sports betting and the need for educational resources to focus on harm reduction strategies rather than abstinence based. Dr. Casiero noted the removal of cannabinoids from the banned substance list, the impact substance abuse has on mental health, the injury surveillance program, and the impact the political landscape surrounding the transgender policy and impending federal policies could have on the Association's policy.
 - d. **Visit from NCAA Board of Governors chair Linda Livingstone.** The committee received updates from the NCAA Board of Governors from Linda Livingstone. Dr. Livingstone discussed the challenges facing the Association and the impact on Division III, sports betting, mental health, and congressional engagement and the impact on the future of collegiate athletics.

- e. **Special Olympics Updates.** The committee was visited by Lexxi O'Brien from Special Olympics North America. The mission and history of Special Olympics was discussed and best practices for creating an enhanced Special Olympics experience on their own campuses were shared, including the Unified Collegiate Championship Week.
 - f. **Visit from Greg Ricketts, former student-athlete representative on Board of Governors.** The committee was visited by Greg Ricketts, former student-athlete representative on the Board of Governors. Ricketts discussed congressional engagement, the House settlement, sports betting, the transfer portal, and his role on the Board of Governors. Also, the committee provided feedback on ways Ricketts could best advocate for SAAC and discussed how to keep an open line of communication.
 - g. **Congressional engagement.** The committee was visited by Dawn Buth, managing director of government relations, to discuss congressional engagement and the importance of student-athletes using their voices to impact change on Capitol Hill. Additionally, Buth provided an update on the viewpoints of congressional leaders and the importance of getting a federal bill passed to protect student-athletes.
 - h. **Conference and partner conference meetings.** The committee discussed the expectations and responsibilities for SAAC representatives attending partner conference meetings, reviewed the talking points, and provided general guidance for conference meetings.
5. **Strategic items for discussion.**
- a. **Sports betting.** The committee reviewed and discussed the potential to remove the prohibition of wagering on professional sports, and if it should impact student-athlete eligibility. The committee was in support of deregulating professional sports betting but noted the importance of providing educational resources and fostering a supportive culture to encourage individuals with gambling trouble to seek help rather than fearing punishment. The committee suggested that the educational resources be interactive sessions aimed at allowing individuals to better understand the risks of gambling and provide strategies for self-control and teach financial literacy. Furthermore, the committee believes it is important for prohibitions to remain in place for collegiate sports betting to protect the integrity of the game.
 - b. **Transfer Portal and Self-Release within Division III.** The committee was asked to provide feedback pertaining to their experience with the transfer portal, their opinions on if it should be used or required within Division III, and how it may work with the self-release. The committee noted that the confidentiality of the self-release is beneficial if it was known which institutions were interested, but the transfer portal opened the doors to institutions outside of Division III. Furthermore, the committee was interested in finding an avenue in which the transfer portal and self-release could coexist.

6. Division III SAAC business and subcommittees.

- a. **Special Olympics Partnership and updates.** Staff shared an update on the latest Special Olympics engagement from the membership. The committee was reminded that all member institutions are to report events involving Special Olympics back to the national office. This should be done whether the event is hosted by the institution or a group of student-athletes participated in an existing event. The committee noted that some may not know the reporting form exists and discussed how to increase awareness by added a link to the SAAC social media accounts.
- b. **Division III subcommittee reports.**
 - (1) Hot Topics. The hot topics subcommittee discussed the obstacles and success of their podcasts, particularly the podcast with President Charlie Baker. The subcommittee is currently editing a podcast with former SAAC representative, Josh Africa, and hopes to have that completed and available soon. Following Convention, the subcommittee looks to put together a more comprehensive list of hot topic areas for discussion based on the conversations had in Nashville.
 - (2) Mental and physical health. The mental and physical health subcommittee discussed the success of the virtual town hall meeting and the progress in creating podcast initiatives for the 2025 spring focusing on mental and physical health. The subcommittee will continue to develop its comprehensive social media content plan to ensure a consistent online presence.
 - (3) Sports ethics and fan behavior. The sports ethics and fan behavior subcommittee noted the success of its social media campaign focusing on promoting good sportsmanship both on and off the field. The subcommittee is working on its grassroots initiatives and its desire to develop more direct communication with each member institution to support these discussions on campus, including the distribution of a one-page resource.

7. Informational items and other business.

- a. **Future meeting dates.**
 - April 2025, Virtual.
 - July 19-20, 2025, Indianapolis.
- b. **“What is SAAC?” resource.** The committee discussed the potential for creating a one-page resource that would provide information on what SAAC is, what the committee does and the ideal characteristics of a SAAC representative. The committee considered ways to improve the onboarding of new committee members and noted the desire to create a buddy system for new committee members and the

potential for orientation to be led more by their peers. It was also suggested that a living document be created to allow outgoing members to provide insight on their experiences, subcommittee work, and tips for incoming committee members.

- c. **Honor SAAC members rolling off.** The committee honored those SAAC members rolling off following Convention and provided a year-end video recap of the committee's successes.
- d. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned Tuesday, January 14, 4:39 p.m.

Committee Chair: Jack Langan, Cornell College; Midwest Conference.

Staff Liaisons: *Ali Spungen, Division III Governance*
 Katie Mucci, Division III Governance
 Becca Trovato, Academic and Membership Affairs
 Jonathan Youngblood, Championships

NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee January 13-14, 2025, Meeting	
Attendees – Primary Members:	
Arturo Casas, Manchester University; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference.	
Lillian Case, Juniata College; Landmark Conference.	
Julia Hathaway, Virginia Wesleyan University; Old Dominion Athletic Conference.	
Josey Johnson, Otterbein University; Ohio Athletic Conference.	
Gavin Jones, Westminster College; Presidents' Athletic Conference.	
Jacob Keller, University of Wisconsin-Platteville; Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.	
Sebastian Knowles, Hartwick College; Empire 8.	
Jack Langan, Cornell College; Midwest Conference.	
Theodore Lockhart III, William Paterson University of New Jersey, New Jersey Athletic Conference.	
Molly Malachow, Penn State Behrend; Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference.	
Ella Miller, Wisconsin Lutheran College; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference.	
Grace Moothart, Austin College; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference.	
Adaobi Nebuwa, Colby College; New England Small College Athletic Conference.	
Hayley Peck, Purchase College, State University of New York; Skyline Conference.	
Morgan Shaw, Willamette University; Northwest Conference	
Nadia Simmons, North Carolina Wesleyan; USA South.	
Zoey Wexler, Western New England University; Commonwealth Coast Conference.	
Nathaniel Whisman, University of Valley Forge; United East Conference.	
Oliver Williams, Westfield State University, Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference.	
Brian Wigley, Shenandoah University; ex-officio Management Council attendee.	

Attendees – Associate Members in Attendance
Gideon Armah-Amissah, Luther College; American Rivers Conference.
Jacqueline Brandon, California Lutheran; SCIAAC.
Alberto Bustamante, Northern Vermont – Lyndon; North Atlantic Conference.
Jamie Carfagna, Muhlenberg College; Centennial Collegiate Conference.
Amanda Cohen, Plattsburgh; State University of New York Athletic Conference.
Zack Durr, Castleton University; Little East Conference.
Grace Hadlich, The College of St. Scholastica; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference
Holly Hall, Alma College; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.
Kayshaun Higgs, Medgar Evers College; City University of New York Athletic Conference.
Paige Kluba, Piedmont College; Collegiate Conference of the South.
Brooke LaVallee, Skidmore College; Liberty League.
Sarah Lodge, Wooster College; North Coast Athletic Conference.
Camy McKenzie, Hendrix College; Southern Athletic Association.
Grace Norman, Carthage College; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin.
Dominic Petruzzelli, Neumann University; Atlantic East Conference.
Tanner Rowland, UC Santa Cruz; Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference.
Jenna Schuda, Misericordia University; Middle Atlantic Conference.
Abby Sweeney, Smith College; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference.
Absentees:
Garrett Clasen, University of Chicago; University Athletic Association.
David Hidden, Eureka College; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.
Muthu Meenakshisundaram, University of Minnesota, Morris; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference.
Caitlyn Smith, Lasell; Great Northeast Athletic Conference.
Guests in Attendance:
Linda Livingstone, Lexxi O'Brien and Greg Ricketts.
NCAA Staff Liaisons:
Katie Mucci, Ali Spungen, Becca Trovato and Jonathan Youngblood.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Charlie Baker, Dawn Buth, Deena Casiero, Michael Cioroianu, Jalaun Covington, LaGwyn Durden, Malik Henry, Natalia Herrera, Louise McCleary, Kevin McColaugh, Bill Regan and Anne Rohlman.