



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION III STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 15-16, 2020, MEETING**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

- None.

**LEGISLATIVE ITEMS.**

- None.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Meeting Conducted Virtually.** The committee members gathered virtually via Microsoft Teams to conduct its November 15-16 meeting.
2. **Administrative items.**
  - a. Rosters. The committee reviewed and updated its current roster.
  - b. October 14, 2020, blanket waiver SAAC meeting report. The committee approved the report with no changes.
  - c. Conference/Partner-Conference matchups. The committee discussed partner conference and the roles of primary and associate member pairings.
  - d. SAAC expectations document. The committee reviewed the expectations of SAAC primary and associate members.
  - e. Robert's Rules of Order. The committee reviewed the Robert's Rules of Order guidelines document.
  - f. Policies and procedures. The committee reviewed its policies and procedures, with an emphasis in analyzing the document to allow flexibility due to COVID-19 and SAAC member terms.
    - (1) As a result of the discussions, the committee voted to approve a change to the verbiage regarding national SAAC participation for individuals who no longer actively participate as student-athletes. The new language, modeled after the Division II SAAC expectation bylaw, was adopted at the meeting. The committee cited increased flexibility, student-athlete development and factors outside of student-athlete control as the main rationale for altering existing guidelines.
    - (2) "A student-athlete representative initially must be a full-time undergraduate student at a Division III institution, as defined by the regulations of the institution, and must be a student-athlete or former student-athlete in a Division III sport. Each conference representative must be initially enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at a Division III institution in the applicable conference."

3. **DIII SAAC Elections.** The committee elected members to executive leadership positions within the committee, as well as liaisons to Division III and Association-wide committees and working groups. The new liaisons' terms will become effective immediately following the 2021 NCAA Convention
  - a. Chair: Anthony Francois, former volleyball student-athlete at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
  - b. Vice Chair: Bridgett Finn, soccer student-athlete at Lebanon Valley College.
  - c. Communications Director: Abigail Newkirk, soccer student-athlete at Bluffton University.
  - d. Management Council (female): Madeira Alexander, softball student-athlete at Salisbury University.
  - e. Management Council (male): Jack Mulvihill, lacrosse student-athlete at St. John Fisher College.
  - f. Board of Governors Student-Athlete Engagement Committee: Bridgett Finn, soccer student-athlete at Lebanon Valley College.
  - g. Board of Governors Student-Athlete Engagement Committee: Janne Brown, lacrosse student-athlete at Aurora University.
  
4. **Division III Updates.** Dan Dutcher, Vice President for Division III, and Louise McCleary, Managing Director of Division III, joined the committee to provide updates about the Division III membership and current issues facing institutions. Topics covered included the status of higher education, the Knight Commission's updates, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) legislation and the LGBTQ and Allies Awards Ceremony awards at the NCAA Convention. In the competition realm, the committee was updated on officiating decisions and alterations made by the championships committee, as well as the reduction of minimum contests to qualify for postseason participation.
  
5. **NCAA Executive Updates.** NCAA President Mark Emmert, Donald Remy, Chief Operating Officer, and Derrick Gragg, Senior Vice President of Inclusion, Education and Community Engagement, joined the committee to provide updates about the NCAA and the landscape of college athletics. Particular areas of emphasis included the state of the NCAA, operations of the national office, the resocialization of sport guidelines from the NCAA Sports Science Institute, the Name, Image and Likeness legislation and its impact on a state/national level, and the Unity Pledge and patch. Dr. Gragg presented the NCAA's eight-point plan for racial and social justice, the recent efforts by the office of inclusion, and how student-athletes can make a substantial impact on their campuses.

6. **NCAA Sport Science Institute Updates.** Brian Hainline, NCAA Chief Medical Officer, joined the meeting to provide insight into the work of the NCAA Sport Science Institute. Dr. Hainline provided insight into the resocialization guidelines outlined by the NCAA, the testing requirements for collegiate programs, particular concerns regarding indoor/outdoor sports, and the nature of the virus and its spread. He answered questions about the impact of stringent testing requirements on Division III institutions and the mental health aspect of the pandemic.
  
7. **NCAA Division III Management Council October 2020 Report.** The committee's representative who serve as members of the Management Council discussed the council's recent October meeting. Topics included Management Council's strong support of NIL legislation, the blanket waiver approval related to student-athlete eligibility, the inclusive language document presented by the NCAA inclusion office and the Unity Pledge/Mark.
  
8. **NCAA 2021 Convention.** The committee discussed the upcoming 2021 virtual NCAA Convention. First, the committee discussed the generalized schedule for the Convention, articulating the roles of the committee members throughout the Convention. Next, it brainstormed and solidified agendas for the joint meetings in which the committee takes part at Convention. Lastly, it discussed the Division III SAAC virtual social mixer, where Division III student-athletes will connect with one another.
  
9. **Division III SAAC Working Group Report Outs.**
  - a. **Mental and Physical Health Working Group.** The working group reviewed the 2020 mental-health social media campaign and announced its preliminary discussions on implementing a second campaign in 2021. Members of the group also discussed the impacts of COVID-19 and the struggle with loss of identity for student-athletes and how the committee could support the student-athlete population from the national level. Suggestions for this support included potential panel discussions via social media and resources developed for the membership. Additionally, the working group presented its plan to partner with organizations operating in the areas of student-athlete mental health, including Alston for Athletes and Morgan's Message, to continue to amplify the committee's efforts and widen its impact.
  
  - b. **Special Olympics Working Group.** The working group first reported to the committee about the execution of the July meeting Special Olympics event. The July 2020 event allowed for small group connections and active engagement, using the Special Olympics' School of Strength videos and student-athlete led cool down. Many of the successful aspects of the session will be incorporated in the January Convention event, which is being solidified by the group. In addition to planning the calendar year's committee events, the working group is focused on the development of a one-page resource distributed to the membership that will provide recommendations for Division III institutions to use and maintain their partnerships with local Special Olympics organizations. Finally, the working group encouraged continued ideation via shared Google form to enhance virtual events with the organization going forward.

- c. **Social Justice and Inclusion Working Group.** The Social Justice and Inclusion working group discussed the reception of the social media campaign related to the importance of civic engagement and voting. The group proposed a similar social media emphasis in February, where the committee would focus on Black History month, amplifying student-athlete voices via the Division III SAAC platforms. Important elements will include presenting Division III as a valuable path for minority student-athletes and a webinar or virtual information session for prospective students. Two other initiatives were discussed: the LGBTQ event that was planned pre-COVID-19 pandemic and the sexual assault prevention resource. The LGBTQ moment of silence event has been tabled for the academic year, with a severe lack of in-person athletics events hampering its feasibility. The sexual assault prevention resource will be distributed in May for sexual assault awareness month.
  
10. **NCAA Committee and Working Group reports.** The committee representatives who serve on Division III committees and working groups and Association-wide committees provided updates on the most recent meetings and reports.
  
11. **Special Olympics Partnership.** The staff liaisons discussed with the committee regarding the Special Olympics Partnership in Division III. With the pandemic, there have unfortunately been nearly no reported Special Olympics Events. As a result, the committee has been tasked with creatively thinking about how to engage the membership and provide opportunities to continue to execute events with the organization. Suggestions from the committee included:
  - a. Team bonding exercises,
  - b. Hype videos,
  - c. Testimonials,
  - d. Non-sports related activities, and more.
  
12. **Civic Engagement Legislation discussion.** Earlier this year, the Division I SAAC proposed legislation to provide student-athletes with a day off from sports activities on election day to exercise their civic duty to vote. The initiative received strong support from the Division III SAAC, who believe that engagement in the community should be emphasized. The committee agreed the best course of action is to discuss within the social justice and inclusion working group and take action to ensure it is not just a one off effort focused on election day, but rather a continued push for student-athlete community engagement.
  
13. **Legislation.** NCAA staff provided the committee with an overview of the legislative process and timeline. The committee reviewed the legislation proposed on name, image, and likeness, assessing the pros/cons for the legislation to be voted upon at the NCAA 2021 Convention. After the final review, the committee took a poll to establish an official National SAAC position on the proposal.

The official position paper will be co-written by several members of the committee and read at the virtual convention.

- **National SAAC Position vote.** The committee vote was completed by the primary SAAC members representing the Division III conferences. 36 votes were cast in favor of the legislative proposal, with zero votes against the proposal, and three abstention votes. The committee will support the proposal citing examples of how Division III student-athletes could benefit from a change in name, image, and likeness usage and the importance of equal treatment of athletes to Division III students.

**14. Blanket Waiver Update.** The committee was provided an update on the blanket waiver on student-athlete eligibility approved through the Division III Management Council. The national SAAC was key in providing support of the waiver, which will allow student-athletes to compete in the maximum number of athletic contests without losing a season of eligibility.

**15. Future Meetings.**

- a. January 9-10, 2021; via Microsoft Teams.
- b. April 10-11, 2021; via Microsoft Teams
- c. July 17-18, 2021; via Microsoft Teams.
- d. September/October; date TBD.
- e. November 14-15, 2021.

**16. Other Business.**

- a. #d3Donates Campaign. The #d3Donates campaign is an initiative led by Division III associate commissioners, who are seeking an endorsement from the national SAAC. The committee had some reservations about overstretching its members, so agreed to promote using its social platforms if given templates and colors.
- b. Women's Basketball Student-Athlete Engagement Committee. The group discussed the effort of the Division I Women's Basketball Student-Athlete Engagement Committee. There is currently momentum to replicate this committee at the DIII level, with collaboration from the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and input from the student-athlete voice. The committee will select members who could serve on this group, picking female basketball student-athletes from the national SAAC to participate.
- c. Unity Pledge and Patches. The Unity Pledge and Patch has been an immense success with collaboration from all three SAACs. The committee expressed its contentment with its rollout and implementation.

**17. Adjournment.**

*Committee Chair: Braly Keller, Nebraska Wesleyan University; American Rivers Conference*

*Staff Liaisons: Ali Spungen, Division III Governance  
 Brynna Barnhart, Enforcement  
 Corey Berg, Academic and Membership Affairs  
 Patrick Malin, Leadership Development  
 Adam Skaggs, Division III Governance*

<b>NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee November 15-16, 2020, Meeting</b>
<b>Attendees-Primary Members:</b>
Madeira Alexander, Salisbury University; Capital Athletic Conference.
Devonte Amos, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
Paxton Blanchard, Keene State College; Little East Conference.
Janne Brown, Aurora University; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference.
Gerard Bryant, John Jay College of Criminal Justice; ex officio Management Council attendee.
Mika Costello, Willamette University; Northwest Conference.
Hannah Durst; Baldwin-Wallace University; Ohio Athletic Conference.
Charlotte Ellis; Crown College (Minnesota); Upper Midwest Athletic Conference.
Annabelle Feist, Williams College; New England Small College Athletic Conference.
Bridgett Finn, Lebanon Valley Conference; Middle Atlantic Conferences.
Anthony Francois, John Jay College of Criminal Justice; City University of New York Athletic Conference.
Cameron Gardner-Nicholson, Penn State University, Altoona; Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference.
Braly Keller, Nebraska Wesleyan University; American Rivers Conference.
Catherine Lanigan, Juniata College; Landmark Conference.
Michael Litz, Penn State University, Abington; North Eastern Athletic Conference.
Michael McMahon, Becker College; New England Collegiate Conference.
Jack Mulvihill, St. John Fisher College; Empire 8 Conference.
Abigail Newkirk, Bluffton University; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference.
Mercy Ogutu, Trinity Washington University; Independents.
Colby Pepper, Covenant College; USA South Athletic Conference.
Isaiah Swann, University of Texas at Dallas; American Southwest Conference.
Denise Udelhofen, Loras College; ex officio Management Council attendee.
<b>Absentees- Primary Members:</b>
Arcel Kabongo-Ngoy, Western New England University; Commonwealth Coast Conference.
Christine Mayorga, Montclair State University; New Jersey Athletic Conference.
<b>Guests in Attendance</b>
Dan Dutcher; Division III governance.
Mark Emmert; NCAA President.
Derrick Gragg; Inclusion, Education and Community Engagement.
Brian Hainline; Sport Science Institute.
Louise McCleary; Division III governance.
Donald Remy; Executive.

<b>NCAA Staff Liaisons:</b>
Brynna Barnhart, Enforcement.
Corey Berg, Academic and membership affairs.
Patrick Malin, Leadership development.
Adam Skaggs, Division III governance.
Ali Spungen, Division III governance.