



**REPORT OF THE NCAA DIVISION III  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP  
JULY 9, 2020, TELECONFERENCE**

**ACTION ITEM.**

- **Nonlegislative item.**

- National Student Clearinghouse (NCS) Research Study.

(1) Recommendation. To initiate a research study of the 2013 Division III football cohort – approximately 1,800 - using data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to better define the Division III student-athlete graduation rates data issue.

(2) Effective Date. August 1, 2020.

(3) Rationale. The working group recommends focusing the study on football due to the student-athlete voluntary graduation rate reports indicating African American football players have the lowest graduation/retention rates. This research study would allow the working group to determine the “true” graduation rate for Division III football student-athletes by answering the following questions:

- a. Did the football student-athletes that did not graduate from their first school eventually graduate from another school?
- b. When did the players separate from the first school?
- c. If they did graduate from a second (or third) school, when did that happen?

The additional research would allow the working group to narrow down the reasons for the low graduation rates and examine the issue by race/ethnicity. The working group then could consider a better-informed path of action that may include further research via a survey of institutions to refine the reasons for the low graduation rates even more. If further research is unnecessary, the publication and distribution of the NSC study findings could raise awareness and compel institutions and/or conferences to act on their own.

(4) Budget Impact. \$1,500.

(5) Student-Athlete Impact. None.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Welcome and Roster.** The chair, Gerard Bryant, commenced the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group teleconference at 11:01 a.m. Eastern time Thursday, July 9, 2020. The working group noted these extraordinary times and the impact of COVID-19 and the racial inequality protests and Black Lives Matter movement. The chair also welcomed Jarett Gerald, the new Division III governance postgrad intern.
  
2. **Report of April 9, 2020, Teleconference.** The working group reviewed the report and had no edits or corrections.
  
3. **Division III SAAC Discussion on Racial Inequality.** Cat Lanigan, a member of the working group and the Division III national SAAC, and Niya Blair, director in the NCAA office of inclusion, reported that SAAC recently held two videoconferences to discuss racial inequality. Discussions focused on why it is important for student-athletes to be engaged in this conversation and the role of national SAAC. Approximately three-quarters of the committee has engaged in the discussion on how to support the Black Lives Matter movement and address racial inequalities. SAAC wants to collaborate with the working group, and it shared its initial ideas:
  - Develop a formal mentoring program. On its latest videoconference, some SAAC members noted that student-athletes of color feel isolated on campus. There also is a concern that campus administrators do not act accordingly when there are racial injustices on campus (e.g., hanging a confederate flag, racially insensitive memos). SAAC wants to assist administrators in understanding that there are different resource needs (e.g., financial, access). SAAC believes a mentoring program may assist with these concerns, and during its July meeting, the committee will discuss the program parameters.
  - Engage and support “Rock the Vote”. Rock the Vote is built to maximize the power of young people and encourage voting in all elections, not just the presidency.
  - Encourage the NCAA to have inclusive language with NCAA forms and surveys.
  - Leverage the SAAC social media platform to raise awareness.
  - Create a diversity and inclusion position on the SAAC executive leadership board.
  - Produce a national SAAC podcast to encourage discussions on racial injustices.

The working group members discussed steps that they have taken on their campuses to address racial injustices – Zoom meetings, campus-wide discussions, town halls, facilitated conversations in safe spaces, and educational panels. The impact of COVID-19 has made it more difficult to have these discussions. Several noted that their campus has shifted the lens from diversity and inclusion to an anti-racist focus. The working group encouraged SAAC to develop a safe place for students to honestly share their emotions.

- 4. National Student Clearinghouse (NCS) Research Study.** Based on the limited graduation data-collection to-date, Division III does not know the central reasons for its low graduation rates among African American football players. While staff has hypotheses (e.g., over-recruitment, academic unpreparedness, enrollment pressures), there is a need for more certainty for the low rates. It would be premature to embark on the development of best-practices and/or policy to impact the outcomes until there is additional data.

The working group recommends a research study using data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to better define the Division III graduation rates data. (See nonlegislative action item).

- 5. Division III Diversity Recruiting and Retention Plans.** The working group is still collecting best practices to develop a resource to assist athletics departments in the recruitment and retention of diverse student-athletes. On its next teleconference, it will discuss the best practices and ways to share this information with the membership.
- 6. Other Business.** The working group discussed the return to sport and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on student-athletes of color. Working group members noted that they are noticing the negative impact of COVID-19 on their students of color.
- 7. Next Steps.** On its next teleconference, the working group will receive an update on SAAC's racial inequality discussions and action steps; continue its discussion on student-athlete graduation rates, review recruiting and retention strategies and best practices, and if completed, review the updated Association-wide strategic plan.
- 8. Future Teleconferences.** The next teleconference is slated for October 8, 2020, at 12 p.m. Eastern time.
- 9. Adjournment.** The call adjourned at 12 p.m. Eastern time.

*Staff Liaisons: Louise McCleary, Division III Governance*

*Niya Blair, Office of Inclusion*

*Jarett Gerald, Division III Governance*

*Amy Wilson, Office of Inclusion*

NCAA Division III Diversity and Inclusion Working Group Teleconference date: July 9, 2020	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Gerard Bryant, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.	
Javier Cevallos, Framingham State University.	
Jason Fein, Bates College.	
Cat Lanigan, Juniata College.	
Joe Onderko, Presidents Athletic Conference.	
Dan Schumacher, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire.	
Jason Verdugo, Hamline University.	
Nicolle Wood, Salem State University.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
Natalie Winkelfoos, Oberlin College.	
<b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>	
Niya Blair, Louise McCleary, Jarett Gerald, Amy Wilson.	
<b>Other in Attendance:</b>	
None.	