



REPORT OF THE
NCAA COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ATHLETICS
FEBRUARY 7, 2024, VIDEOCONFERENCE

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative Items.

- **Women's wrestling as a National Collegiate championship sport.**
 - a. Recommendation. That the three divisional legislative bodies sponsor legislation to add women's wrestling as an NCAA National Collegiate championship; further, to establish a women's wrestling committee.
 - b. Effective date. Immediate. The women's wrestling committee would begin its work in January 2025 to prepare for the first national collegiate championship in winter 2026.
 - c. Rationale. Women's wrestling has been an emerging sport in all three divisions since 2020. In fall of 2023, 41 NCAA member institutions met minimum sports-sponsorship requirements, putting the sport above the legislatively required threshold of 40 varsity programs to be considered for National Collegiate championship status. Additionally, more than 70 NCAA member schools have indicated plans to sponsor women's wrestling in the 2023-24 academic year.

After consultation with divisional committees and examining the costs for a new National Collegiate championship, the CWA is confident that women's wrestling would make an excellent addition to the NCAA's current championship structure. Adding women's wrestling as a National Collegiate Sport also aligns with the increased focus on and investment in women's sports as evidenced by NCAA president's business plan and the NCAA's new media rights agreement.

Additionally, women's wrestling is an Olympic sport and has the support of the USOPC. The sport also has attracted diverse participants and a high number of first-generation college students. The CWA strongly urges all three divisions to sponsor and adopt the sport as a National Collegiate championship.

- d. Estimated budget impact. The preliminary cost estimate for establishing a NCAA women's wrestling national collegiate championship and committee is approximately \$1.5 million recurring annually. Expenses include, but are not limited to, internal staffing needs, committee administration and travel, team travel, facility rentals and equipment, officiating and other anticipated championship operational expenses. The cost estimate also

assumes a broadcast production cost of \$400K to account for the NCAA having to fund the production distribution of the championship.

[Note: The budget is contingent upon approval by the NCAA Board of Governors Finance and Audit Committee and the appropriate divisional governance committees during their spring and summer 2024 meetings and must account for the net asset impact of all consolidated future initiatives.]

- e. Student-athlete impact. Adding women's wrestling as a championship sport would offer postseason participation opportunities for female student-athletes at institutions currently sponsoring the sport.

2. Nonlegislative Items.

- **None.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** Committee on Women's Athletics Chair Ragean Hill welcomed the committee and noted the meeting being held on National Girls and Women in Sports Day.
2. **Review of previous reports.** The committee approved the report from its September 18 meeting as presented.
3. **Review of women's wrestling as a potential championship sport.** The committee reviewed the continued progress women's wrestling has made in surpassing the minimum sports sponsorship threshold required for a national collegiate championship sport and agreed to recommend that all three divisions sponsor legislation. (See Legislative Action Item above.)
4. **Review of Emerging Sports for Women process documents and program enhancements.**
 - a. **Application guide for prospective sports.** Per the committee's previous discussion regarding potential modifications and improvements to the Emerging Sports for Women program, the committee reviewed suggested revisions to the application process based on the work of the appointed subcommittee, feedback from current emerging sports, feedback from recent sports that had applied, and other individuals who had worked with the program. The committee agreed to amend the application timeline, and that when recommending legislative action for the divisions to add a sport to the emerging sport list, that it be done via noncontroversial legislation to expedite the process; however, a division could also

proceed through its normal legislative cycle if preferred. Staff noted that an online application is in development to streamline the application and review process. The committee approved staff finalizing the revised application documents and directed staff to post the application online in March for prospective sports to meet the August 1 application deadline. The committee will review additional document updates for materials specific to supporting emerging sports in the program during their May meeting.

- b. NACDA collaboration opportunities.** Representatives from current emerging sports requested that National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) consider allowing an emerging sport to accrue points toward the association's Learfield Directors' Cup competition, which annually acknowledges institutions' broad-based success in athletics in all three NCAA divisions. Staff discussed the concept with NACDA, but officials noted concerns with implementation. The CWA acknowledged the implementation concerns and asked staff to explore continued collaboration with NACDA and some type of recognition or award for emerging sports that could help grow emerging sport sponsorship.
 - c. Recommendations to enhance the emerging sports for women program from the USOPC.** The NCAA's ongoing collaboration with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee garnered feedback regarding the Emerging Sports for Women program. Four current emerging sports (equestrian, rugby, triathlon, and women's wrestling) are also Olympic sports, and the USOPC has expressed interest in increasing support for these sports as part of the Olympic movement. The committee reviewed recommendations from the USOPC that may incentivize sport growth and noted that some of the suggestions are already being addressed through the ongoing committee and staff work to enhance the program. The committee appreciated the USOPC's input and will continue to consider the recommendations.
- 5. Review of CWA policies and procedures.** The committee reviewed an updated version of its policies and procedures. Staff asked committee members for additional review and feedback by its May meeting to consider for final approval.
- 6. NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee updates.** Highlights from the Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee's meetings at the NCAA Convention were noted. Updates from the Divisions I and II SAAC meetings were not provided, as members representing the two committees were unable to attend the videoconference.
- 7. Update on NCAA media rights agreement.** The committee received an update on the January 4 [announcement](#) regarding the agreement between ESPN and the NCAA on a new, eight-year media rights contract. Staff noted that the agreement provides increased coverage for the Divisions II and III women's volleyball, men's and women's basketball, and football championships. The CWA noted excitement that the new agreement increases coverage and exposure for women's sports.

8. **NCAA Association-wide committee review update.** The committee received an update from a working group charged with reviewing the current structure, function, and effectiveness of the four NCAA DEI bodies. The representative group, which includes CWA members, was appointed in January to undertake the charge from the NCAA Board of Governors for all Association-wide committees to determine their relevance and review whether changes are necessary to better align their work with the requirements outlined in the new NCAA Constitution. The working group has met twice and is working through questions the Board of Governors provided to guide the review. The group also met with representatives from the Association-wide Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports to better understand that committee's structure to determine whether aspects of that model could be applied to the DEI committees as well. The working group will reconvene in early March to begin considering potential models and ultimately will share final recommendations with the four DEI committees at a joint meeting later in March.
9. **NCAA Woman of the Year award discussion items.**
 - a. **Feedback from award ceremony at the 2024 NCAA Convention.** The committee shared positive feedback from the second Woman of the Year award ceremony held in conjunction with the NCAA Convention. A survey of attendees revealed significant appreciation of how the event was staged, and many of the recipients remarked that this award ranked as being more noteworthy and meaningful than others they have received. CWA members applauded staff for their efforts and continue to believe the event is a highlight of their NCAA committee experience.
 - b. **WOTY process review.**
 - (1) **Timeline.** Staff reviewed the timeline for nominating and selecting the 2024 NCAA Woman of the Year and noted the increased collaboration planned between the office of inclusion and the communications department to increase promotional efforts and administrative support during the process.
 - (2) **Application of the 0.5 rubric for athletics.** The committee revisited its decision to add a 0.5 rating option when calculating the scoring rubric used for selection to further distinguish honorees. This was implemented in 2023 for all categories except athletics due to logistical challenges. The committee reviewed and approved a recommendation from staff to update the athletics rubric and apply the 0.5 rating in cases where an individual has received specified second-tier or similar recognition in multiple years (e.g., second-team all-conference in more than one year; international participation on a national team). The committee agreed this change would help the selection committee with evaluations. Staff will update the rubric online and in committee materials for the 2024 cycle.

- (3) **Request for new subcommittee members.** The committee noted one Division I vacancy for the selection committee and asked Division I members of the CWA who are interested to notify staff.

10. **2024 NCAA Convention recap.**

- a. **Actions regarding stunt.** Staff noted that Division III adopted stunt as an emerging sport, effective Aug. 1, 2024. Staff also noted that the Division I Council approved the CWA's recommendation to increase the maximum financial aid equivalency limit in stunt from nine to 14.
- b. **Emerging Sports for Women educational session.** Staff summarized the educational session sponsored by the office of inclusion that featured leaders from each of the six emerging sports who shared information about their sport including demographics, competition and championship formats, sponsorship data, general budgetary considerations and onboarding time and process. There was a significant interest in this session and the office of inclusion is working on additional opportunities to host similar education sessions moving forward.
- c. **Transgender student-athlete participation policy update.** Staff provided an update about a presentation to the Board of Governors during its January meeting on the landscape of state and federal laws and the application of the Transgender Student-Athlete Participation Policy. It was noted that the board will continue its discussions on the policy during its April meeting.

11. **Other business.**

- **2024 NCAA Inclusion Forum.** Staff noted that registration for the 2024 NCAA Inclusion Forum, April 24-26, in Indianapolis is open and provided instructions for committee member registration.

12. **Future meetings.** The CWA will convene virtually in May and in a joint meeting with the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee in May. The CWA will convene in person in September in Indianapolis.

- a. May 14, 2024.
- b. May 22, 2024.
- c. September 26 – 27, 2024.

13. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m. Eastern time.

Committee Chair: Ragean Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
Staff Liaisons: Maison Hubbard, Academic and Membership Affairs.
Micaela Liddane, Championships and Alliances.
Ashlesha Lokhande, Office of Inclusion.
Gretchen Miron, Office of Inclusion.

NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics February 7, 2024, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Greg Bamberger, Fairmont State University.	
Katherine Rowe Fell, University of Findlay.	
Sharief Hashim, Susquehanna University.	
Ragean Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.	
Marybeth Lamb, Bridgewater State University.	
Katherine Loh, Florida Southern College.	
LaWanda Miller, Fayetteville State University.	
Michael Perez, California State University, Fullerton.	
Quinton Ross, Alabama State University.	
Chuck Sack, Neumann University.	
Tracy Shoemake, Texas State University.	
Steve Stoute, Canisius University.	
Sean Sullivan, Salve Regina University.	
Marion Terenzio, State University of New York at Cobleskill.	
Dawn Turner, Lander University.	
Absentees:	
Laura Amaya, Roberts Wesleyan University.	
Elise Byun, University of California, Berkeley.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Lillian Case, Juniata College (representing the Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee).	
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:	
Maison Hubbard, Micaela Liddane, Ashlesha Lokhande and Gretchen Miron.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance for Portions of the Meeting:	
Stacey Blackwell, Gary Brown, Gail Dent, Julie Kimmons, Felicia Martin, Corbin McGuire, Jean Merrill, Stephanie Quigg, Amy Wilson and Donovan Wilson.	