



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ATHLETICS
MAY 12, 2023, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** Committee on Women's Athletics Chair, Ragean Hill, welcomed committee members and previewed key agenda items.
2. **Review of previous reports.** The committee approved the report from its February 14, 2023, videoconference as presented.
3. **Emerging sports annual spring update.** The committee received an annual update on the progress and sustainability of each emerging sport from the national governing body or recognized national organization of each sport including acrobatics & tumbling, equestrian, rugby, stunt, triathlon, and women's wrestling. The reports offered specific sport information, including roster sizes, program additions, student-athlete demographics, coaches' development, championship format, TV coverage, etc. The committee discussed each sport and raised any relevant questions or concerns regarding each sport's progress and additional information to request for the sport updates in the fall. During this discussion, the committee reiterated the need for sports to meet the established requirements for championship consideration and suggested the subcommittee reviewing the process guide consider other benchmarks to support sport growth during the 10-year period to reach championship sport status. The committee agreed to discuss the issue of sport growth during its next meeting.
4. **Process for an emerging sport becoming a National Collegiate Championship.** Given the increasing growth in several emerging sports, the committee revisited the transition process and general timeline for an emerging sport to become a championship sport and how the committee would be involved in that process.
5. **Emerging Sports Process Review Guide update.** The committee was notified that the subcommittee established [during its February meeting](#) to review the emerging sport process guide will begin meeting this summer. Some committee members have shared initial observations about the process guide that the subcommittee plans to address, including:
 - a. Consider clarifying and/or strengthening the expectations of what information should be provided to the CWA once a sport is in the program, including alerting the committee of any material changes or developments.
 - b. Review the 10-year timeframe for an emerging sport to reach championship sport status and consider additional timeframes or benchmarks (e.g., requiring specified

benchmarks at the five-year mark, and/or additional timeframes regarding re-application to the program for sports that are removed or denied).

- c. Consider incorporating more examples of what the committee expects to see from a health and safety perspective, and the emerging sport's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in its application.
6. **Squash application to the Emerging Sports for Women program.** During its February meeting, the squash application review subcommittee submitted a report noting some of the documents did not meet the technical requirements of the process guide. Squash leadership was notified and provided the necessary supplemental information to meet the objective criteria outlined in the process guide. Support letters were provided from two additional NCAA member conferences as well.

The subcommittee convened prior to the committee's videoconference to consider this new information and declined to recommend squash to the full committee. The subcommittee remained concerned with the sport's potential as an NCAA emerging sport primarily because of the lack of demonstrated growth in sponsorship in the decade since squash was removed from the program, the regionalization of existing programs, a lack of diverse student-athlete demographics, and concerns regarding facility requirements and access. The subcommittee also was concerned with a lack of desire and urgency in the recommendation letters for squash to be elevated to NCAA championship sport status, especially in comparison to the rapid growth of other emerging sports. Accordingly, the committee agreed that squash will not be added as an emerging sport. Squash leadership will be informed of the committee's decision and the concerns raised.

7. **NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee updates.** The three divisional student-athlete advisory committee members of the committee were unable to attend the meeting.
8. **Equal Distance Project request.** The committee revisited correspondence from the Equal Distance Team advocating that the race distances in men's and women's cross country be the same. The committee reviewed this issue in February and agreed to have a broader discussion and share any feedback that members received from their respective coaches and athletes about the proposed change. Committee members shared mixed feedback from their coaches on whether to increase the women's distances, as well as varying opinions among members during the discussion. Staff liaisons to the divisional sport committees shared that there has previously been little to no interest in the NCAA membership to change the distances. Given the diverse opinions on the discussion, members agreed the request from the Equal Distance Team and the potential gender equity impact merit further consideration by the sport committees.

The committee recommended that the Division I and Division III Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committees and the Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Committee solicit feedback from cross country student-athletes and coaches more

broadly to inform a potential distance change. The committee also recommended that the sport committees consider engaging with the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports about whether adjusting the race distances would raise any health and safety concerns for women student-athletes.

9. **NCAA Woman of the Year award application opening and next steps.** Staff noted that the 2023 Woman of the Year application opened to the membership April 26 and will close June 21. All member schools and conferences have been encouraged to submit nominations and will receive reminders. Staff also noted improvements in the application process designed to ease significant staff hours spent organizing applications for the conference offices.

In addition, the changes the committee adopted in February for the award rubric to add a 0.5 option have been incorporated and posted online so that schools are aware when nominating. The WOTY selection subcommittee will meet this summer after all nominees are submitted to review applications and narrow the nominees down to the Top 30 and Top 9. The 2023 Woman of the Year award will be presented at the 2024 NCAA Convention in Phoenix, with all 30 honorees invited to attend.

10. **Title IX developments and tracking.** The committee received updates related to Title IX and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).
 - a. **New Office for Civil Rights resource on athletics equity.** Earlier this year the OCR released a [resource](#) for colleges, universities and conferences related to their compliance with athletics equity. This resource is also available via the NCAA's website.
 - b. **Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on athletics eligibility under Title IX.** In April, the OCR released its [notice of proposed rulemaking on athletics eligibility under Title IX](#), which offers guidance on how the office wishes to interpret transgender student-athlete participation in athletics under Title IX. The notice clarifies that Title IX prohibits discrimination against transgender students in school sports and prohibits categorical bans of transgender athletes from playing on the team of their gender identity. Prohibiting categorical bans would apply at the college and university level. The committee noted that an update regarding the NCAA's transgender student-athlete participation policy will be provided at the joint meeting with the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee on May 15.
 - c. **Anticipated rule from the Office for Civil Rights on sexual assault.** Staff also informed the committee that a final rule is anticipated in late May from the OCR on Title IX regarding the adjudication of sexual assault on campus.

11. **USOPC/NCAA Para-Inclusion Project volunteer request.** Staff provided an update on the USOPC/NCAA Para- Inclusion Project created to engage schools with adaptive sports to collectively increase Paralympic sport understanding, awareness and connection across the college landscape. The USOPC is seeking input and engagement from the NCAA diversity, equity and inclusion committees to help implement these initiatives and has asked for a member from the CWA, MOIC and the NCAA Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity to serve in this capacity. Chuck Sack volunteered to represent the CWA.
12. **Other business.**
 - a. **Recognition of outgoing committee members.** The committee recognized the following members who are completing their terms at the end of August for their outstanding service to the committee: Renee Bostic, Monica Lebron, Miriam Merrill, Kellianne Milliner, Robert Nelsen, Donna Price Henry, Renie Shields and Maya Riddlesprigger.
 - b. **Future meetings.** The CWA will meet jointly with the MOIC on Monday, May 15. The committee also will convene in the fall on a date to be determined.
13. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 1:51 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.

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Attendees:	
Greg Bamberger, Fairmont State University.	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Ragean Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.	
Marybeth Lamb, Bridgewater State University.	
Katherine Loh, Florida Southern College.	
Miriam Merrill, Pomona-Pitzer Colleges.	
LaWanda Miller, Fayetteville State University.	
Robert Nelson, California State University, Sacramento.	
Chuck Sack, Neumann University.	

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Renie Shields, Saint Joseph's University.
Marion Terenzio, State University of New York at Cobleskill.
Absentees:
Laura Amaya, Roberts Wesleyan University.
Gabby Elliott, Denison University.
Donna Price Henry, University of Virginia's College at Wise.
Monica M. Lebron, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
Kellianne Milliner, West Chester University of Pennsylvania.
Maya Riddlesprigger, California State University, Fullerton.
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:
John Baldwin, Gary Brown, Kina Davis, Gail Dent, Niya Blair Hackworth, Jean Merrill, Jeff Mlynski, Laura Peterson Mlynski, Stephanie Quigg, Shay Wallach and Amy Wilson.