

Division III Presidents Council - Statement on Inclusion

Throughout history, sports have broken barriers for inclusion. As Division III begins a year-long celebration of its [50th anniversary](#), the Presidents Council reaffirms the importance of inclusion and belonging within the division.

The NCAA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators. The Association seeks to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion improve the learning environment for all student-athletes and enhance excellence within the Association.

“We stand boldly with anyone who wants to participate in Division III athletics,” said Presidents Council Chair Jim Schmidt, chancellor Wisconsin Eau-Claire. “Division III athletics provides a fair, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for all student-athletes.”

Division III has consistently been a leader in inclusion practices within the Association. At the 2015 NCAA Convention, delegates endorsed the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. The working group led the efforts to create the [Student Immersion Program](#) and co-authored the [Diverse Workforce hiring guide](#). The guide is designed to help campus and conference hiring managers fulfill their role in recruiting, selecting and retaining a diverse workforce. For over a decade, Division III also has provided annual [grant funding](#) to members committed to enhancing ethnic minority and gender representation in athletics administration and assistant coaching positions.

In 2016, the Division III Management Council supported the formation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) Working Group. The LGBTQIA+ Working Group has developed comprehensive LGBTQ education with its [OneTeam Program](#), [non-discrimination policy guide](#) and program to honor individuals, campuses and conferences for their work in this space. Meet the [past recipients](#) of the LGBTQ of the Year Recognition Award.

The Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee also put inclusion at the forefront with the development of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Working Group, naming this a key priority for the 2023-24 academic year.

The Division III Presidents Council is proud of the division’s past, current and future efforts to provide educational resources, initiatives and programming to enhance the foundations of a diverse and inclusive culture. Inclusion continues to be an important aspect of intercollegiate athletics, and the Division III governance structure collaborates with its 430+ member institutions and 40+ conference offices to support their diversity and inclusion goals as the division strives to create a welcoming and safe space for all student-athletes.

