



**SAVANNAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
PUBLIC INFRACTIONS DECISION  
June 20, 2019**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions (COI) is an independent administrative body of the NCAA comprised of individuals from the Division I membership and public. The COI is charged with deciding infractions cases involving member institutions and their staffs.<sup>1</sup> This case involved agreed-upon improper eligibility certification violations at Savannah State University (SSU).<sup>2</sup> Those violations provided the underlying support for a failure to monitor violation.

A panel of the COI considered this case through the cooperative summary disposition process in which all parties agreed to the primary facts and violations, as fully set forth in the summary disposition report (SDR). The panel accepted the institution's self-imposed penalties but proposed additional penalties that were administrative in nature. SSU accepted the panel's proposed additional penalties. Therefore, there is no opportunity to appeal.

This case centered on eligibility certification failures, triggered in large part by frequent staff turnover and the harmful ripple effect of that turnover. SSU agreed that it improperly certified 43 student-athletes in 10 sport programs over a five-year period. Many of the improper certifications stemmed from the institution's failure to certify progress-toward-degree requirements. Other certification errors involved amateur status confirmation, academic nonqualifiers and exceeding seasons of competition limits. As a result of these certification mistakes, student-athletes practiced, competed, and/or received actual and necessary expenses while ineligible. The panel concludes the violations are Level II.

SSU and the enforcement staff attributed the certification violations and the resultant failure to monitor to several factors, the most significant of which was frequent turnover of staff involved in the certification process. This turnover resulted in a lack of understanding of academic certification legislation and inadequate communication among the various staff members involved in the certification process. Certification education was weak, particularly for staff

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<sup>1</sup> Infractions cases are decided by hearing panels comprised of COI members. Decisions issued by hearing panels are made on behalf of the COI.

<sup>2</sup> Although currently a Division I institution and a member of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, SSU is in the process of reclassifying to Division II. Despite going through the reclassification process, this case is appropriately before the Division I COI because of SSU's current divisional status and when the violations occurred. SSU has a total enrollment of approximately 3,600 and sponsors seven men's sports and eight women's sports. This is SSU's third infractions case with prior cases in 2006 (football) and 1998 (multiple sports).

members outside of compliance involved in certification such as the registrar and academic advisors in the athletics department. Additionally, during the time period of the violations, the institution underwent multiple NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP) audits as well as the implementation of an Academic Progress Rate (APR) improvement plan. SSU's compliance staff had difficulty balancing its certification duties, APP audits and implementation of the certification improvement plan. Because of its certification failures, SSU agreed that it failed to monitor. As with the underlying certification violations, the failure to monitor is Level II.

The COI notes that this is the fifth infractions case in the past year that has centered on eligibility certification failures. The COI emphasizes that proper eligibility certification is a fundamental obligation of Division I membership and sufficient resources must be allocated to ensure the integrity of this process.

The panel accepts the parties' factual agreements and concludes violations occurred. After considering applicable aggravating and mitigating factors, the panel classifies SSU's case as Level II-Standard. Utilizing the current penalty guidelines and NCAA bylaws authorizing additional penalties, the panel adopts and prescribes the following penalties: two years of probation; a fine of \$5,000; a vacation of records; and reporting requirements. The penalties section of this decision details these and other penalties.

## **II. CASE HISTORY**

The origins of this case date to January 2017, when the institution was selected for an APP audit by the NCAA Academic and Membership Affairs (AMA) staff. After a February 2017 preliminary review, AMA discovered the institution was not appropriately applying or tracking progress-toward-degree legislation. AMA notified the NCAA enforcement staff in March 2017 of the pending APP audit; however, in April 2017, the institution publicly announced it would seek reclassification to Division II. In July 2017, the AMA Subcommittee on Data Review granted the institution's request to indefinitely suspend the APP data review provided the institution applied for Division II membership by February 2018.

From July to October 2017, the enforcement staff requested documentation regarding student-athlete certification from the institution. In response, however, the institution provided incomplete information. Consequently, the enforcement staff requested that the institution hire an outside consultant to complete a recertification for at least the previous four academic years and identify potential NCAA certification violations. On November 9, 2017, the enforcement staff issued a notice of inquiry. In December 2017, the institution hired a consultant to review its certification program. Over the next six months, the consultant reviewed the institution's certification program in all sports and provided its findings to SSU, which SSU forwarded to the enforcement staff in mid-July 2018. From August 2018 to January 2019 the enforcement staff conducted its investigation, concluding with the issuance of a notice of allegations on January 31, 2019. Shortly thereafter, SSU agreed to process the case through summary

disposition. The parties submitted the SDR to the COI on April 23, 2019, and on May 24, 2019, a panel considered the case via teleconference. It accepted the facts contained in the SDR and the institution's proposed penalties. The panel proposed additional penalties that were administrative in nature, including reporting requirements and attendance at NCAA Regional Rules Seminars. SSU agreed to the additional penalties.

### **III. PARTIES AGREEMENT**

#### **A. PARTIES' AGREED-UPON FACTUAL BASIS, VIOLATIONS OF NCAA LEGISLATION AND VIOLATION LEVELS**

The parties jointly submitted an SDR that identified an agreed-upon factual basis, violations of NCAA legislation, aggravating factors, mitigating factors and violation levels.<sup>3</sup> The SDR identified:

- 1. [NCAA Division I Manual Bylaws 14.9.1 and 14.10.1 (2013-14); 14.3.2.1.1 (2013-14 and 2015-16); 14.4.3.3 (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2016-17); 14.4.3.1.7-(b) (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2017-18); 12.1.1.1.3, 14.01.1, 14.3.1, 14.4.3.1-(b), 14.4.3.1-(c), 14.4.3.1.7, 14.4.3.2, and 16.8.1 (2013-14 through 2017-18); 12.8 and 12.8.1 (2014-15 and 2016-17); 12.11.1 (2014-15 through 2017-18); 14.4.3.1-(a) (2015-16); 12.10.1 (2015-16 and 2017-18); 14.2.1, 14.2.2 and 14.4.3.1.6 (2016-17); and 14.4.3.1.4.2 (2017-18)] (Level II)**

SSU and the enforcement staff agreed that during at least the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years, the institution improperly certified at least 43 student-athletes in 10 sports as eligible for competition, resulting in 58 violations of academic and amateurism certification and progress-toward-degree legislation. As a result, 43 student-athletes competed and received actual and necessary expenses while ineligible or not certified. Additionally, the institution failed to withhold 41 student-athletes from competition during subsequent academic years before their eligibility was reinstated. Specifically:

- a. During the 2013-14 through the 2017-18 academic years, the institution improperly certified progress-toward-degree requirements of 25 student-athletes in nine sports. Specifically:
  - (1) During the 2013-14 and 2015-16 through 2017-18 academic years, three student-athletes in three sport programs competed without final academic eligibility certification. [Bylaws 14.9.1 (2013-14); 14.3.1 (2013-14 through 2017-18); and 12.10.1 (2015-16 and 2017-18)]

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<sup>3</sup> This decision provides the agreed-upon factual basis, violations and violation levels as exactly stated in the SDR, except for shortening references to the parties.

- (2) During the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years, five student-athletes in three sport programs competed without satisfactory completion of at least 18 semester-hours of degree credit toward the students' designated degree program since the beginning of the certifying institution's preceding regular two semesters. [Bylaws 14.4.3.1-(b) and 14.4.3.1.7 (2013-14 through 2017-18); and 14.4.3.1.4.2 (2017-18)]
- (3) During the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years, nine student-athletes in five sport programs competed without satisfactory completion of six semester-hours of academic credit or degree credit toward the students' designated degree program during the preceding regular academic term. [Bylaws 14.4.3.1-(c) and 14.4.3.1.7 (2013-14 through 2017-18)]
- (4) During the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2017-18 academic years, four student-athletes in four sport programs, who were in their third year of enrollment, competed without designating or enrolling in a program of studies or earned credit toward a specific baccalaureate degree program. [Bylaw 14.4.3.1.7-(b) (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2017-18)]
- (5) During the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years, eight student-athletes in six sport programs competed without successfully completing their percentage-of-degree requirements. [Bylaw 14.4.3.2 (2013-14 through 2017-18)]
- (6) During the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2016-17 academic years, three student-athletes in two sports programs competed without meeting the necessary minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements. [Bylaw 14.4.3.3 (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2016-17)]
- (7) During the 2015-16 academic year, a student-athlete competed without satisfactory completion of 24 semester-hours prior to the start of the student-athlete's second year of collegiate enrollment. [Bylaw 14.4.3.1-(a) (2015-16)]
- (8) During the 2016-17 academic year, a student-athlete practiced and competed while enrolled less than full time at the institution. [Bylaws 14.2.1 and 14.2.2 (2016-17)]
- (9) During the 2016-17 academic year, one football student-athlete competed without satisfactory completion of nine semester-hours of degree credit toward the student's designated degree program during the preceding regular academic term. [Bylaw 14.4.3.1.6 (2016-17)]

- b. During the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years, 19 student-athletes in eight sport programs practiced and competed prior to having their amateurism certified. [Bylaw 12.1.1.1.3 (2013-14 through 2017-18)]
  - c. During the 2013-14 and 2015-16 academic years, two student-athletes practiced and competed while certified as nonqualifiers. [Bylaw 14.3.2.1.1 (2013-14 and 2015-16)]
  - d. During the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years, two student-athletes in two sports competed after exhausting all seasons of competition. [Bylaws 12.8 and 12.8.1 (2014-15 and 2015-16)]
2. **[NCAA Division I Manual Constitution 2.8.1 (2013-14 through 2017-18)] (Level II)**

SSU and the enforcement staff agreed that the scope and nature of the violations set forth in Violation No. 1 demonstrate that during at least the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years, the institution violated the NCAA principle of rules compliance when it failed to adequately monitor student-athlete eligibility certification to ensure compliance with NCAA legislation. Specifically Savannah State: (1) failed to monitor adequately the athletics eligibility and amateurism certification process pursuant to its written policy; (2) failed to apply properly academic certification legislation; (3) did not involve or communicate sufficiently with institutional staff members from departments outside of athletics in the certification process; (4) failed to provide adequate rules education to institutional staff members responsible for athletics certification; and (5) failed to withhold ineligible student-athletes from team travel and competition.

## **B. PARTIES' AGREED-UPON AGGRAVATING AND MITIGATING FACTORS**

Pursuant to Bylaw 19.6.2-(g), the parties agreed to the following aggravating and mitigating factors for SSU:

1. Aggravating factors. [Bylaw 19.9.3]
  - (a) A history of major violations by the institution. [Bylaw 19.9.3-(b)]
  - (b) Multiple Level II violations by the institution. [Bylaw 19.9.3.-(g)]
2. Mitigating factors. [Bylaw 19.9.4]

None

#### **IV. REVIEW OF CASE**

The SDR fully detailed the parties' positions in the infractions case and included the agreed-upon primary facts, violations, violation levels and aggravating and mitigating factors. After reviewing the parties' principal factual agreements and respective explanations surrounding those agreements, the panel accepts the parties' SDR and concludes that the facts establish Level II violations of NCAA legislation. Specifically, SSU failed to properly certify more than 40 student-athletes over five years and failed to monitor the certification process.

##### **Certification Violations**

The parties agreed that this case centered on improper certification of student-athletes and that these failures led to student-athletes practicing, competing and receiving impermissible expenses while ineligible. In total, SSU improperly certified 43 student-athletes from the 2013-14 through 2017-18 academic years. These failures resulted primarily from persistent staff turnover. This turnover contributed to insufficient understanding of certification legislation and the disruption of the institution's certification process. While the core Level II violations involved certification, the improper certifications rippled through several areas of NCAA legislation, resulting in violations of Bylaws 12, 14 and 16.<sup>4</sup>

As a fundamental obligation of NCAA membership, institutions must ensure that all student-athletes are properly certified, both prior to participation in intercollegiate athletics, and on a continuing basis throughout their enrollment. Within the framework of certification, Bylaw 12 governs amateurism and eligibility for collegiate athletics. Of relevance to this case, this bylaw requires member institutions to verify student-athletes' amateurism status and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from competition. Bylaw 14 and its subparts establish requirements for academic eligibility. Specifically, Bylaw 14 sets degree completion benchmarks, requires student-athletes to be enrolled full-time and to meet GPA minimums. It also sets limits on seasons of competition. Bylaw 16 permits institutions to provide aid and actual and necessary expenses to student-athletes who have met Bylaw 14 eligibility requirements.

Frequent turnover of staff members led to weaknesses in SSU's certification process. Despite those weaknesses, SSU was fortunate because it certified most student-athletes correctly. The process, however, was insufficient and some student-athletes were improperly certified. The harmful effects of constant staff turnover and the resultant absence of proper checks and balances caused SSU to improperly certify 43 student-athletes over a five-year span. Among other errors, SSU improperly certified student-athletes without verifying that the student-athletes had received final amateurism and academic certification from the Eligibility Center and met percentage-toward-degree requirements, semester completion and GPA minimums.

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<sup>4</sup> Beginning with the 2014-15 Division I Manual, a member institution's obligation to withhold ineligible student-athletes from competition moved from Bylaw 14 to Bylaw 12. For ease of reference, this decision will refer to that obligation in the context of Bylaw 12, not Bylaw 14.

The institution also allowed some student-athletes to compete after exhausting all seasons of competition. These failures violated various subparts of Bylaws 12 and 14.

The improper certifications also caused ineligible student-athletes to practice, compete, and/or receive actual and necessary expenses when the student-athletes were ineligible to do so. Consequently, SSU violated Bylaw 16. Certifying student-athletes' amateurism and eligibility and prohibiting ineligible student-athletes from competing are core responsibilities of Division I membership and must be completed prior to participation in intercollegiate athletics. SSU failed to fulfill those obligations. In doing so, SSU did not meet membership responsibilities detailed in Bylaw 12.

SSU's certification shortcomings are similar to recent Level II certification cases. Like those Level II cases, SSU's case involves a similar number of improperly certified student-athletes and sport programs that occurred over a similar number of years. *See Charleston Southern University (2018)* (concluding that Level II violations occurred when, among other violations, CSU improperly certified 55 student-athletes in 12 sports over six years); *North Carolina Central University (2018)* (concluding that Level II violations occurred when, among other violations, NCCU improperly certified 22 student-athletes in seven sports over three years); and *Grambling State University (2017)* (involving Grambling State's improper certification of 45 student-athletes in 11 sports over three-and-one-half years). Consistent with those cases and in alignment with the definition of Level II violations in Bylaw 19.1.2, the panel concludes that the certification violations are Level II because SSU received more than a minimal but less than substantial competitive advantage when 43 student-athletes competed while ineligible.

### **Failure to Monitor**

SSU agreed that it failed to monitor student-athlete eligibility certification over a five-year period. Persistent staff turnover was at the root of the institution's certification failures. This constant churn in staff members triggered several breakdowns in the certification process, including failure to follow written policies, inadequate communication and insufficient rules education. Other factors, including frequent audits, diverted compliance staff efforts from the certification process. Finally, as a result of these weaknesses, the institution did not withhold ineligible student-athletes from team travel and competition, further demonstrating a failure to monitor. As with the underlying violations, SSU committed a Level II violation when it failed to meet its compliance and monitoring responsibilities under Constitution 2.

Constitution 2 sets forth core principles for institutions conducting intercollegiate athletics programs. Constitution 2.8.1 requires an institution to abide by all rules and regulations, monitor compliance and report instances of noncompliance.

Frequent turnover of staff members had a detrimental ripple effect in SSU's certification process. Institutional policy stated that the eligibility certification process was to be completed by the institution's certification committee. This committee consisted of the faculty athletics representative, head coach of the sport program being certified, head of athletics academic

advising, sport specific athletics academic advisor, compliance, registrar and director of athletics. However, because of persistent turnover, some certification committee positions were vacant. Among other effects, the revolving door of certification committee members resulted in the committee meeting less frequently. An additional consequence of this turnover was the lack of continuity and experience among the members of the certification committee. This led to breakdowns in communication, a failure of committee members to understand their roles and to properly apply both the institution's written procedures, and pertinent NCAA legislation. Numerous current and former institutional staff members reported a lack of clarity as to which departments or individuals should be completing and monitoring continuing academic eligibility certification. Further, the compliance staff failed to provide adequate eligibility certification education to the registrar and athletics academic advising staff, including the proper application of certification legislation. This contributed to staff members misapplying NCAA bylaws, resulting in erroneous academic and amateurism certification.

Moreover, because of its chronic certification issues, the institution was subjected to multiple APP audits while also attempting to create an APR improvement plan. Compliance staff members had difficulty balancing their certification duties with the demands of audits and the implementation of the APR improvement plan, further contributing to the monitoring failures.

All of these weaknesses combined to create a lack of checks and balances needed to ensure academic certification was complete and accurate, resulting in the certification failures detailed in Violation No. 1 and demonstrating that SSU failed to monitor its certification processes. The certification shortcomings culminated with the institution failing to withhold 41 ineligible student-athletes from competition in subsequent years, causing these student-athletes to receive impermissible expenses associated with ineligible competition and further demonstrating that the institution failed to monitor. SSU's certification failures demonstrated that SSU failed to meet the standards identified in Constitution 2.

Pursuant to the Level II definition in Bylaw 19.1.2, the panel concludes that SSU's failure to monitor is Level II. The COI has previously concluded that Level II failure to monitor violations occur when the underlying certification violations are also Level II. *See Charleston Southern; NCCU; Grambling State; Samford University (2016); Campbell University (2016); and University of North Carolina at Greensboro (2015)*. The panel notes that, despite the weaknesses in its eligibility certification program, the vast majority of student-athletes were properly certified during the five-year period of this case. The panel also considers the enforcement staff's assessment that SSU made reasonable and continuous efforts to certify its student-athletes properly. Considering these factors, and that the underlying violations in this case were limited in scope—both in the legislation violated and the number of student-athletes improperly certified—the panel concludes that SSU failed to monitor rather than lacked institutional control.



## V. PENALTIES

For the reasons set forth in Sections III and IV of this decision, the panel accepts the parties' agreed-upon factual basis and violations and concludes that this case involved Level II violations of NCAA legislation. Level II violations are significant breaches of conduct that provide or are intended to provide more than a minimal but less than an extensive advantage.

In considering penalties, the panel first reviewed aggravating and mitigating factors pursuant to Bylaws 19.9.2, 19.9.3 and 19.9.4 to determine the appropriate classifications for the parties. The panel then used the current penalty guidelines (Figure 19-1) and Bylaws 19.9.5 and 19.9.7 to prescribe penalties.

The parties agreed to two aggravating factors in this case. The panel accepts the agreed-upon aggravating factors but gave little weight to Bylaw 19.9.3-(b), *A history of major violations by the institution*. When assessing weight, the panel can consider such factors as the time between cases and the type of violations involved. Here, because SSU's previous two cases occurred 13 and 21 years ago and did not involve the same types of violations, the panel accorded little weight to Bylaw 19.9.3-(b).

The enforcement staff did not identify any mitigating factors, but SSU proposed one mitigating factor—Bylaw 19.9.4-(b), *Prompt acknowledgement of the violation(s), acceptance of responsibility and imposition of meaningful corrective measures and/or penalties*. The panel did not adopt this proposed mitigating factor. In making this determination, the panel notes that, in February 2017, SSU became aware it had potential certification violations and deficiencies from the APP audit preliminary findings. At that time, the institution took no affirmative steps to review or self-disclose the potential violations. Recently, the COI determined that this mitigating factor did not apply because an institution did not respond promptly when alerted to potential certification issues. *See Campbell* (concluding that Bylaw 19.9.4-(b) did not apply because the institution failed to promptly respond to concerns raised by the conference office and the institution's compliance staff regarding Campbell's certifying officer's failure to understand NCAA legislation relating to eligibility certification). After considering the weight and number of these factors, and past cases of a similar nature, the panel classifies this case as Level II-Standard.

SSU agreed to the facts, violations and the panel's proposed additional penalties. Therefore, there is no opportunity to appeal. All penalties prescribed in this case are independent and supplemental to any action that has been or may be taken by the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics through its assessment of postseason ineligibility, historical penalties or other penalties. In prescribing penalties, the panel considered SSU's cooperation in all parts of this case and determines it was consistent with the institution's obligation under Bylaw 19.2.3. The panel also considered SSU's corrective actions, which are set forth in Appendix One, in prescribing penalties. After considering all information relevant to this case, the panel prescribes the following penalties (self-imposed penalties are noted):

### **Core Penalties for Level II-Standard Violations (Bylaw 19.9.5)**

1. Probation: Two years of probation from June 20, 2019, through June 19, 2021.<sup>5</sup>
2. Financial penalty: The institution shall pay a fine of \$5,000. (Self-imposed.)

### **Additional Penalties for Level II-Standard Violations (Bylaw 19.9.7)**

3. Public reprimand and censure through the release of the public infractions decision.
4. Vacation of records. SSU acknowledged that ineligible participation occurred as a result of the violations in this case. Therefore, pursuant to Bylaws 19.9.7-(g) and 31.2.2.3, SSU shall vacate all regular season and conference tournament records and participation in which ineligible student-athletes detailed in this case competed from the time they became ineligible through the time they were reinstated as eligible for competition. (Self-imposed.) This order of vacation includes all regular season competition and conference tournaments. Further, if the ineligible student-athletes participated in NCAA postseason competition at any time they were ineligible, the institution's participation in the postseason contest(s) in which ineligible competition occurred shall be vacated. The individual records of the ineligible student-athletes shall also be vacated.<sup>6</sup> However, the individual finishes and any awards for all eligible student-athletes shall be retained. Further, the institution's records regarding its athletics programs, as well as the records of the head coaches, shall reflect the vacated records and shall be recorded in all publications in which such records are reported, including, but not limited to, institutional media guides, recruiting material, electronic and digital media plus institutional, conference and NCAA archives. Any institution that may subsequently hire the affected head coaches shall similarly reflect the vacated wins in their career records documented in media guides and other publications cited above. Head coaches with vacated wins on their records may not count the vacated wins toward specific honors or victory "milestones" such as 100th, 200th or 500th career victories. Any public reference to the vacated contests shall be removed from the athletics department stationary, banners displayed in public areas and any other forum in which they may appear. Any trophies awarded by the NCAA in these sports shall be returned to the Association.

Finally, to ensure that all institutional and student-athlete vacations, statistics and records are accurately reflected in official NCAA publications and archives, the sports information

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<sup>5</sup> SSU proposed a two-year probationary period. Although institutions may recommend terms of probation, the authority to prescribe probation rests solely with the COI. Periods of probation always commence with the release of the infractions decision.

<sup>6</sup> Among other examples, a vacation of records is particularly appropriate when a case involves ineligible competition and a failure to monitor violations. See COI IOP 5-15-4. Further, the COI has consistently prescribed a vacation of records in cases that involved student-athletes competing when they failed to meet amateurism and eligibility requirements. See *Alabama A&M University* (2018), *Grambling State*, *Mississippi Valley State University* (2017), *Alcorn State University* (2016), *Campbell*, *Samford* and *UNCG*.

director (or other designee as assigned by the director of athletics) must contact the NCAA Media Coordination and Statistics office and appropriate conference officials to identify the specific student-athletes and contests impacted by the penalties. In addition, the institution must provide the NCAA Media Coordination and Statistics office with a written report detailing those discussions. This document will be maintained in the permanent files of the NCAA Media Coordination and Statistics office. This written report must be delivered to the office no later than 45 days following the release of this decision or, if the vacation penalty is appealed, at the conclusion of the appeals process. The sports information director (or designee) must also inform the Office of the Committees on Infractions (OCOI) of this submission to the NCAA Media Coordination and Statistics office. A copy of the written report shall also be delivered to the OCOI at the same time.

5. At least on one occasion during the two-year probationary period, each staff member responsible for the certification of student-athletes shall be required to attend an NCAA Regional Rules Seminar. The sessions and those who attended shall be identified in the annual compliance reports and should include eligibility and certification related educational sessions.
6. During the period of probation, SSU shall:
  - a. Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive compliance and educational program on NCAA legislation to instruct coaches, the faculty athletics representative, all athletics department personnel and all institutional staff members with responsibility for NCAA recruiting and certification legislation;
  - b. Submit a preliminary report to the OCOI by August 15, 2019, setting forth a schedule for establishing this compliance and educational program;
  - c. File with the OCOI annual compliance reports indicating the progress made with this program by May 15<sup>th</sup> during each year of probation. Particular emphasis shall be placed on SSU's eligibility certification process and related compliance education.
  - d. Inform prospects in all affected sport programs in writing that SSU is on probation for two years and detail the violations committed. If a prospect takes an official paid visit, the information regarding violations, penalties and terms of probation must be provided in advance of the visit. Otherwise, the information must be provided before a prospect signs an NLI; and
  - e. Publicize specific and understandable information concerning the nature of the violations by providing, at a minimum, a statement to include the types of violations and the affected sports program and a direct, conspicuous link to the public infractions decision located on the athletic department's main webpage "landing page" and in the media guides for the affected sports program. SSU's statement must: (i) clearly describe the violations; (ii) include the length of the probationary period associated with the case;

and (iii) give members of the general public a clear indication of what happened in the case. A statement that refers only to the probationary period with nothing more is not sufficient.

7. Following the receipt of the final compliance report and prior to the conclusion of probation, SSU's president shall provide a letter to the COI affirming that the institution's current athletics policies and practices conform to all requirements of NCAA regulations.

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The COI advises SSU that it should take every precaution to ensure the terms of the penalties are observed. The COI will monitor the penalties during their effective periods. Any action by SSU contrary to the terms of any of the penalties or any additional violations may be considered grounds for prescribing more severe penalties or may result in additional allegations and violations.

NCAA COMMITTEE ON INFRACTIONS PANEL

Bobby Cremins  
Steve Madva  
Kay Norton  
Roderick Perry  
Dave Roberts  
Greg Sankey  
Sankar Suryanarayan, Chief Hearing Officer

**APPENDIX ONE**

**SSU'S CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AS IDENTIFIED IN THE APRIL 23, 2019, SUMMARY DISPOSITION REPORT**

1. Amended job descriptions for the Registrar and Faculty Athletics Representative to include NCAA Eligibility Certification for all NCAA Sports sponsored by SSU; the Registrar's job description will indicate that he/she is the athletic certifying authority for SSU.
2. Mandated that the Director of Athletics, Athletics Compliance Staff, Registrar, and Financial Aid Officer attend NCAA Regional Rules Seminar for the next three years (Summer 2019, Summer 2020, Summer 2021); following Summer 2021, university officials will attend every other year.
3. Restructured the Athletic Department:
  - a. Restructured the Compliance Department (four new positions)
    - i. Two full-time Compliance Officers – (1) Hired experienced compliance administrator that is serving as Deputy Athletic Director to include primary oversight of Compliance and Academics; (2) Compliance Coordinator and
    - ii. Two full-time Academic Advisors that support the compliance certification process to ensure that student-athletes are aligning with Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements and First-Year Experience programming for student-athletes.
  - b. Appointed new Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) who understands her responsibilities in the certification process and to:
    - i. Implement a end of year survey
    - ii. Manage/Chair the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee (IAC)
4. Reorganized the Athletic Certification Committee to include the following university officials: Registrar, FAR, Deputy AD/Compliance coordinator. (NOTE: The Registrar is the certifying authority and certifications cannot take place if the entire committee is not present.)
5. Updated/changed the Eligibility Certification Process.
6. Prohibited any student-athlete to participate in intercollegiate activity/countable athletic related activity until initial certification has been completed (i.e., no 45-day period will be used, the student-athlete must be officially certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center before prior to certification through SSU Athletic Compliance).

7. Affirmed that the Financial Aid Office has full authority in the athletic grant-in-aid awarding process.

All of the above will be updated in the appropriate athletic department manuals. While not taken as a corrective or punitive action, the institution also notes that all of the individuals involved previously in the eligibility certification process are no longer employed at the institution.

**APPENDIX TWO**  
**Bylaw Citations**

**Division I 2013-14 Manual**

**2.8.1 Responsibility of Institution.** Each institution shall comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the Association in the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics programs. It shall monitor its programs to assure compliance and to identify and report to the Association instances in which compliance has not been achieved. In any such instance, the institution shall cooperate fully with the Association and shall take appropriate corrective actions. Members of an institution’s staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution’s athletics interests shall comply with the applicable Association rules, and the member institution shall be responsible for such compliance.

**12.1.1.1.3 Eligibility for Practice or Competition.** Prior to engaging in practice or competition, a student-athlete shall receive a final certification of amateur status based on activities that occur prior to his or her request for final certification or initial full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I or II institution (whichever occurs earlier).

**14.01.1 Institutional Responsibility.** An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the institution has certified the student-athlete’s eligibility. A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify the student-athlete’s eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete’s eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete’s eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**14.3.1 Eligibility for Financial Aid, Practice and Competition—Qualifiers and Academic Redshirts.** A student-athlete who enrolls in a member institution as an entering freshman with no previous full-time college attendance shall meet the following academic requirements, as certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center, as approved by the Board of Governors, and any applicable institutional and conference regulations, to be considered a qualifier or an academic redshirt.

**14.3.2.1.1 Eligibility for Aid, Practice and Competition.** An entering freshman with no previous college attendance who was a nonqualifier at the time of enrollment in a Division I institution shall not be eligible for regular-season competition or practice during the first academic year of residence. However, such a student shall be eligible for nonathletics institutional financial aid that is not from an athletics source and is based on financial need only, consistent with institutional and conference regulations.

**14.4.3.1 Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements.** Eligibility for competition shall be determined based on satisfactory completion of at least:

- (b) Eighteen semester or 27 quarter hours of academic credit since the beginning of the previous fall term or since the beginning of the certifying institution's preceding regular two semesters or three quarters (hours earned during the summer may not be used to fulfill this requirement) (see Bylaw 14.4.3.1.4);
- (c) Six semester or six quarter hours of academic credit during the preceding regular academic term (e.g., fall semester, winter quarter) in which the student-athlete has been enrolled full time at any collegiate institution (see Bylaw 14.4.3.4.3 for postseason certification).

**14.4.3.1.7 Hours Earned or Accepted for Degree Credit.** The calculation of credit hours under the progress-toward-degree regulation (Bylaw 14.4.3.1) shall be based on hours earned or accepted for degree credit at the certifying institution in a student-athlete's specific baccalaureate degree program, as follows:

- (a) During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use credits acceptable toward any of the institution's degree programs;
- (b) By the beginning of the third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a student-athlete shall be required to have designated a program of studies leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree. From that point, the credits used to meet the progress-toward-degree requirements must be degree credit toward the student's designated degree program;
- (c) A student-athlete who changes his or her designated degree program may comply with the progress-toward-degree requirements if:
  - (1) The change in programs is documented appropriately by the institution's academic authorities;
  - (2) The credits earned prior to the change are acceptable toward the degree previously sought; and
  - (3) The credits earned from the time of the change are acceptable toward the new desired degree.
- (d) Once a student-athlete has begun his or her third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a course may not be used to fulfill the credit-hour requirements for meeting progress toward degree if the student ultimately must repeat the course to fulfill the requirements of the student's major, even if the course fulfills an elective component of the student-athlete's degree program.

**14.4.3.2 Fulfillment of Percentage of Degree Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 40 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 60 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fifth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 80 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree



program. The course requirements must be in the student's specific degree program (as opposed to the student's major).

**14.4.3.3 Fulfillment of Minimum Grade-Point Average Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her second year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum 4.000) that equals at least 90 percent of the institution's overall cumulative grade-point average required for graduation. A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.000) that equals 95 percent of the institution's overall cumulative minimum grade-point average required for graduation. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth or later year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.000) that equals 100 percent of the institution's overall cumulative grade-point average required for graduation. If the institution does not have an overall grade-point average required for graduation, it is permissible to use the lowest grade-point average required for any of the institution's degree programs in determining the cumulative minimum grade-point average. The minimum grade-point average must be computed pursuant to institutional policies applicable to all students.

**14.9.1 Institutional Responsibility for Eligibility Certification.** The president or chancellor is responsible for approving the procedures for certifying the eligibility of an institution's student-athletes under NCAA legislation. The president or chancellor may designate an individual on the institution's staff to administer proper certification of eligibility. Certification of eligibility must occur prior to allowing a student-athlete to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition (see Bylaw 14.01.1). A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify a student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**14.10.1 Obligation of Member Institution to Withhold Student-Athlete From Competition.** If a student-athlete is ineligible under the provisions of the constitution, bylaws or other regulations of the Association, the institution shall be obligated to apply immediately the applicable rule and to withhold the student-athlete from all intercollegiate competition. The institution may appeal to the Committee on Student- Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of the student-athlete's eligibility as provided in Bylaw 14.11 if it concludes that the circumstances warrant restoration.

**16.8.1 Permissible.** An institution may provide actual and necessary expenses to a student-athlete to represent the institution in practice and competition (including expenses for activities/travel that are incidental to practice or competition). In order to receive competition-related expenses, the student-athlete must be eligible for competition.

### **Division I 2014-15 Manual**

**2.8.1 Responsibility of Institution.** Each institution shall comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the Association in the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics programs. It shall monitor its programs to assure compliance and to identify and report to the Association instances in which compliance has not been achieved. In any such instance, the institution shall cooperate fully with the Association and shall take appropriate corrective actions. Members of an institution's staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution's athletics interests shall comply with the applicable Association rules, and the member institution shall be responsible for such compliance.

**12.11.1 Obligation of Member Institution to Withhold Student-Athlete From Competition.** If a student-athlete is ineligible under the provisions of the constitution, bylaws or other regulations of the Association, the institution shall be obligated to apply immediately the applicable rule and to withhold the student-athlete from all intercollegiate competition. The institution may appeal to the Committee on Student- Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of the student-athlete's eligibility as provided in Bylaw 12.12 if it concludes that the circumstances warrant restoration.

**12.1.1.1.3 Eligibility for Practice or Competition.** Prior to engaging in practice or competition, a student-athlete shall receive a final certification of amateur status based on activities that occur prior to his or her request for final certification or initial full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I or II institution (whichever occurs earlier).

### **12.8 Seasons of Competition: Five-Year Rule.**

A student-athlete shall not engage in more than four seasons of intercollegiate competition in any one sport (see Bylaws 17.02.8 and 14.3.3). An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate competition unless the individual completes all of his or her seasons of participation in all sports within the time periods specified below:

**12.8.1 Five-Year Rule.** A student-athlete shall complete his or her seasons of participation within five calendar years from the beginning of the semester or quarter in which the student-athlete first registered for a minimum full-time program of studies in a collegiate institution, with time spent in the armed services, on official religious missions or with recognized foreign aid services of the U.S. government being excepted. For international students, service in the armed forces or on an official religious mission of the student's home country is considered equivalent to such service in the United States.

**14.01.1 Institutional Responsibility.** An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the institution has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify the student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be

considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**14.3.1 Eligibility for Financial Aid, Practice and Competition—Qualifiers and Academic Redshirts.** A student-athlete who enrolls in a member institution as an entering freshman with no previous full-time college attendance shall meet the following academic requirements, as certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center, as approved by the Board of Governors, and any applicable institutional and conference regulations, to be considered a qualifier or an academic redshirt.

**14.4.3.1 Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements.** Eligibility for competition shall be determined based on satisfactory completion of at least:

- (b) Eighteen semester or 27 quarter hours of academic credit since the beginning of the previous fall term or since the beginning of the certifying institution's preceding regular two semesters or three quarters (hours earned during the summer may not be used to fulfill this requirement) (see Bylaw 14.4.3.1.4);
- (c) Six semester or six quarter hours of academic credit during the preceding regular academic term (e.g., fall semester, winter quarter) in which the student-athlete has been enrolled full time at any collegiate institution (see Bylaw 14.4.3.4.3 for postseason certification).

**14.4.3.1.7 Hours Earned or Accepted for Degree Credit.** The calculation of credit hours under the progress-toward-degree regulation (Bylaw 14.4.3.1) shall be based on hours earned or accepted for degree credit at the certifying institution in a student-athlete's specific baccalaureate degree program, as follows:

- (a) During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use credits acceptable toward any of the institution's degree programs;
- (b) By the beginning of the third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a student-athlete shall be required to have designated a program of studies leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree. From that point, the credits used to meet the progress-toward-degree requirements must be degree credit toward the student's designated degree program;
- (c) A student-athlete who changes his or her designated degree program may comply with the progress-toward-degree requirements if:
  - (1) The change in programs is documented appropriately by the institution's academic authorities;
  - (2) The credits earned prior to the change are acceptable toward the degree previously sought; and
  - (3) The credits earned from the time of the change are acceptable toward the new desired degree.

(d) Once a student-athlete has begun his or her third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a course may not be used to fulfill the credit-hour requirements for meeting progress toward degree if the student ultimately must repeat the course to fulfill the requirements of the student's major, even if the course fulfills an elective component of the student-athlete's degree program.

**14.4.3.2 Fulfillment of Percentage of Degree Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 40 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 60 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fifth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 80 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. The course requirements must be in the student's specific degree program (as opposed to the student's major).

**14.4.3.3 Fulfillment of Minimum Grade-Point Average Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her second year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum 4.000) that equals at least 90 percent of the institution's overall cumulative grade-point average required for graduation. A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.000) that equals 95 percent of the institution's overall cumulative minimum grade-point average required for graduation. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth or later year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.000) that equals 100 percent of the institution's overall cumulative grade-point average required for graduation. If the institution does not have an overall grade-point average required for graduation, it is permissible to use the lowest grade-point average required for any of the institution's degree programs in determining the cumulative minimum grade-point average. The minimum grade-point average must be computed pursuant to institutional policies applicable to all students.

**16.8.1 Permissible.** An institution, conference or the NCAA may provide actual and necessary expenses to a student-athlete to represent the institution in practice and competition (including expenses for activities/travel that are incidental to practice or competition). In order to receive competition-related expenses, the student-athlete must be eligible for competition.

### **Division I 2015-16 Manual**

**2.8.1 Responsibility of Institution.** Each institution shall comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the Association in the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics programs. It shall monitor its programs to assure compliance and to identify and report to the Association instances in which compliance has not been achieved. In any such instance, the institution shall cooperate

fully with the Association and shall take appropriate corrective actions. Members of an institution's staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution's athletics interests shall comply with the applicable Association rules, and the member institution shall be responsible for such compliance.

**12.1.1.1.3 Eligibility for Practice or Competition.** Prior to engaging in practice or competition, a student-athlete shall receive a final certification of amateur status based on activities that occur prior to his or her request for final certification or initial full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I or II institution (whichever occurs earlier).

**12.10.1 Institutional Responsibility for Eligibility Certification.** The president or chancellor is responsible for approving the procedures for certifying the eligibility of an institution's student-athletes under NCAA legislation. The president or chancellor may designate an individual on the institution's staff to administer proper certification of eligibility. Certification of eligibility must occur prior to allowing a student-athlete to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition (see Bylaw 14.01.1). A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify a student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**12.11.1 Obligation of Member Institution to Withhold Student-Athlete From Competition.** If a student-athlete is ineligible under the provisions of the constitution, bylaws or other regulations of the Association, the institution shall be obligated to apply immediately the applicable rule and to withhold the student-athlete from all intercollegiate competition. The institution may appeal to the Committee on Student- Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of the student-athlete's eligibility as provided in Bylaw 12.12 if it concludes that the circumstances warrant restoration.

**14.01.1 Institutional Responsibility.** An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the institution has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify the student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**14.3.1 Eligibility for Financial Aid, Practice and Competition—Qualifiers and Academic Redshirts.** A student-athlete who enrolls in a member institution as an entering freshman with no previous full-time college attendance shall meet the following academic requirements, as

certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center, as approved by the Board of Governors, and any applicable institutional and conference regulations, to be considered a qualifier or an academic redshirt.

**14.3.2.1.1 Eligibility for Aid, Practice and Competition.** An entering freshman with no previous college attendance who was a nonqualifier at the time of enrollment in a Division I institution shall not be eligible for regular-season competition or practice during the first academic year of residence. However, such a student shall be eligible for nonathletics institutional financial aid that is not from an athletics source and is based on financial need only, consistent with institutional and conference regulations.

**14.4.3.1 Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements.** Eligibility for competition shall be determined based on satisfactory completion of at least:

- (a) Twenty-four semester or 36 quarter hours of academic credit prior to the start of the student-athlete's second year of collegiate enrollment (third semester, fourth quarter);
- (b) Eighteen semester or 27 quarter hours of academic credit since the beginning of the previous fall term or since the beginning of the certifying institution's preceding regular two semesters or three quarters (hours earned during the summer may not be used to fulfill this requirement) (see Bylaw 14.4.3.1.4);
- (c) Six semester or six quarter hours of academic credit during the preceding regular academic term (e.g., fall semester, winter quarter) in which the student-athlete has been enrolled full time at any collegiate institution (see Bylaw 14.4.3.4.3 for postseason certification).

**14.4.3.1.7 Hours Earned or Accepted for Degree Credit.** The calculation of credit hours under the progress-toward-degree regulation (Bylaw 14.4.3.1) shall be based on hours earned or accepted for degree credit at the certifying institution in a student-athlete's specific baccalaureate degree program, as follows:

- (a) During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use credits acceptable toward any of the institution's degree programs;
- (b) By the beginning of the third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a student-athlete shall be required to have designated a program of studies leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree. From that point, the credits used to meet the progress-toward-degree requirements must be degree credit toward the student's designated degree program;
- (c) A student-athlete who changes his or her designated degree program may comply with the progress-toward-degree requirements if:
  - (1) The change in programs is documented appropriately by the institution's academic authorities;
  - (2) The credits earned prior to the change are acceptable toward the degree previously sought; and
  - (3) The credits earned from the time of the change are acceptable toward the new desired degree.

(d) Once a student-athlete has begun his or her third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a course may not be used to fulfill the credit-hour requirements for meeting progress toward degree if the student ultimately must repeat the course to fulfill the requirements of the student's major, even if the course fulfills an elective component of the student-athlete's degree program.

**14.4.3.2 Fulfillment of Percentage of Degree Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 40 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 60 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fifth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 80 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. The course requirements must be in the student's specific degree program (as opposed to the student's major).

**16.8.1 Permissible.** An institution, conference or the NCAA may provide actual and necessary expenses to a student-athlete to represent the institution in practice and competition (including expenses for activities/ travel that are incidental to practice or competition). In order to receive competition-related expenses, the student-athlete must be eligible for competition.

### **Division I 2016-17 Manual**

**2.8.1 Responsibility of Institution.** Each institution shall comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the Association in the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics programs. It shall monitor its programs to assure compliance and to identify and report to the Association instances in which compliance has not been achieved. In any such instance, the institution shall cooperate fully with the Association and shall take appropriate corrective actions. Members of an institution's staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution's athletics interests shall comply with the applicable Association rules, and the member institution shall be responsible for such compliance.

**12.1.1.1.3 Eligibility for Practice or Competition.** Prior to engaging in practice or competition, a student-athlete shall receive a final certification of amateur status based on activities that occur prior to his or her request for final certification or initial full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I or II institution (whichever occurs earlier).

### **12.8 Seasons of Competition: Five-Year Rule.**

A student-athlete shall not engage in more than four seasons of intercollegiate competition in any one sport (see Bylaws 17.02.8 and 14.3.3). An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate competition unless the individual completes all of his or her seasons of participation in all sports within the time periods specified below:

**12.8.1 Five-Year Rule.** A student-athlete shall complete his or her seasons of participation within five\_calendar years from the beginning of the semester or quarter in which the student-athlete first registered for a minimum full-time program of studies in a collegiate institution, with time spent in the armed services, on official religious missions or with recognized foreign aid services of the U.S. government being excepted. For international students, service in the armed forces or on an official religious mission of the student's home country is considered equivalent to such service in the United States.

**12.11.1 Obligation of Member Institution to Withhold Student-Athlete From Competition.** If a student-athlete is ineligible under the provisions of the constitution, bylaws or other regulations of the Association, the institution shall be obligated to apply immediately the applicable rule and to withhold the student-athlete from all intercollegiate competition. The institution may appeal to the Committee on Student- Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of the student-athlete's eligibility as provided in Bylaw 12.12 if it concludes that the circumstances warrant restoration.

**14.01.1 Institutional Responsibility.** An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the institution has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify the student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**14.2.1 Requirement for Practice.** To be eligible to participate in organized practice sessions, a student-athlete shall be enrolled in a minimum full-time program of studies leading to a baccalaureate or equivalent degree as defined by the regulations of the certifying institution.

**14.2.2 Requirement for Competition.** To be eligible for competition, a student-athlete shall be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies leading to a baccalaureate or equivalent degree, which shall not be less than 12 semester or quarter hours.

**14.3.1 Eligibility for Financial Aid, Practice and Competition—Qualifiers and Academic Redshirts.** A student-athlete who enrolls in a member institution as an entering freshman with no previous full-time college attendance shall meet the following academic requirements, as certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center, as approved by the Board of Governors, and any applicable institutional and conference regulations, to be considered a qualifier or an academic redshirt.

**14.4.3.1 Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements.** Eligibility for competition shall be determined based on satisfactory completion of at least:



- (b) Eighteen semester or 27 quarter hours of academic credit since the beginning of the previous fall term or since the beginning of the certifying institution's preceding regular two semesters or three quarters (hours earned during the summer may not be used to fulfill this requirement) (see Bylaw 14.4.3.1.4);
- (c) Six semester or six quarter hours of academic credit during the preceding regular academic term (e.g., fall semester, winter quarter) in which the student-athlete has been enrolled full time at any collegiate institution (see Bylaw 14.4.3.4.3 for postseason certification).

**14.4.3.1.6 Additional Requirements—Football. [FBS/FCS]** In football, a student-athlete who is a member of the institution's football team and who does not successfully complete at least nine semester hours or eight quarter hours of academic credit during the fall term or does not earn the Academic Progress Rate eligibility point for the fall term (or does not successfully complete either requirement) shall not be eligible to compete in the first four contests against outside competition in the following playing season.

**14.4.3.1.7 Hours Earned or Accepted for Degree Credit.** The calculation of credit hours under the progress-toward-degree regulation (Bylaw 14.4.3.1) shall be based on hours earned or accepted for degree credit at the certifying institution in a student-athlete's specific baccalaureate degree program, as follows:

- (a) During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use credits acceptable toward any of the institution's degree programs;
- (b) By the beginning of the third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a student-athlete shall be required to have designated a program of studies leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree. From that point, the credits used to meet the progress-toward-degree requirements must be degree credit toward the student's designated degree program;
- (c) A student-athlete who changes his or her designated degree program may comply with the progress-toward-degree requirements if:
  - (1) The change in programs is documented appropriately by the institution's academic authorities;
  - (2) The credits earned prior to the change are acceptable toward the degree previously sought; and
  - (3) The credits earned from the time of the change are acceptable toward the new desired degree.
- (d) Once a student-athlete has begun his or her third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a course may not be used to fulfill the credit-hour requirements for meeting progress toward degree if the student ultimately must repeat the course to fulfill the requirements of the student's major, even if the course fulfills an elective component of the student-athlete's degree program.

**14.4.3.2 Fulfillment of Percentage of Degree Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 40 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete

who is entering his or her fourth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 60 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fifth year of collegiate enrollment shall have completed successfully at least 80 percent of the course requirements in the student's specific degree program. The course requirements must be in the student's specific degree program (as opposed to the student's major).

**14.4.3.3 Fulfillment of Minimum Grade-Point Average Requirements.** A student-athlete who is entering his or her second year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum 4.000) that equals at least 90 percent of the institution's overall cumulative grade-point average required for graduation. A student-athlete who is entering his or her third year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.000) that equals 95 percent of the institution's overall cumulative minimum grade-point average required for graduation. A student-athlete who is entering his or her fourth or later year of collegiate enrollment shall present a cumulative minimum grade-point average (based on a maximum of 4.000) that equals 100 percent of the institution's overall cumulative grade-point average required for graduation. If the institution does not have an overall grade-point average required for graduation, it is permissible to use the lowest grade-point average required for any of the institution's degree programs in determining the cumulative minimum grade-point average. The minimum grade-point average must be computed pursuant to institutional policies applicable to all students.

**16.8.1 Permissible.** An institution, conference or the NCAA may provide actual and necessary expenses to a student-athlete to represent the institution in practice and competition (including expenses for activities/travel that are incidental to practice or competition). In order to receive competition-related expenses, the student-athlete must be eligible for competition.

### **Division I 2017-18 Manual**

**2.8.1 Responsibility of Institution.** Each institution shall comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the Association in the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics programs. It shall monitor its programs to assure compliance and to identify and report to the Association instances in which compliance has not been achieved. In any such instance, the institution shall cooperate fully with the Association and shall take appropriate corrective actions. Members of an institution's staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution's athletics interests shall comply with the applicable Association rules, and the member institution shall be responsible for such compliance.

**12.1.1.1.3 Eligibility for Practice or Competition.** Prior to engaging in practice or competition, a student-athlete shall receive a final certification of amateur status based on activities that occur prior to his or her request for final certification or initial full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I or II institution (whichever occurs earlier).

**12.10.1 Institutional Responsibility for Eligibility Certification.** The president or chancellor is responsible for approving the procedures for certifying the eligibility of an institution's student-athletes under NCAA legislation. The president or chancellor may designate an individual on the institution's staff to administer proper certification of eligibility. Certification of eligibility must occur prior to allowing a student-athlete to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition (see Bylaw 14.01.1). A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify a student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**12.11.1 Obligation of Member Institution to Withhold Student-Athlete From Competition.** If a student-athlete is ineligible under the provisions of the constitution, bylaws or other regulations of the Association, the institution shall be obligated to apply immediately the applicable rule and to withhold the student-athlete from all intercollegiate competition. The institution may appeal to the Committee on Student- Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of the student-athlete's eligibility as provided in Bylaw 12.12 if it concludes that the circumstances warrant restoration.

**14.01.1 Institutional Responsibility.** An institution shall not permit a student-athlete to represent it in intercollegiate athletics competition unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the institution has certified the student-athlete's eligibility. A violation of this bylaw in which the institution fails to certify the student-athlete's eligibility prior to allowing him or her to represent the institution in intercollegiate competition shall be considered an institutional violation per Constitution 2.8.1; however, such a violation shall not affect the student-athlete's eligibility, provided all the necessary information to certify the student-athlete's eligibility was available to the institution and the student-athlete otherwise would have been eligible for competition.

**14.3.1 Eligibility for Financial Aid, Practice and Competition—Qualifiers and Academic Redshirts.** A student-athlete who enrolls in a member institution as an entering freshman with no previous full-time college attendance shall meet the following academic requirements, as certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center, as approved by the Board of Governors, and any applicable institutional and conference regulations, to be considered a qualifier or an academic redshirt.

**14.4.3.1.4.2 Additional Application—Baseball.** In baseball, a student-athlete who is subject to the 18 semester/27 quarter hour requirement at the beginning of an institution's fall term and fails to meet the requirement based on the student-athlete's academic record in existence at that time shall not be eligible during the remainder of the academic year.

**14.4.3.1 Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements.** Eligibility for competition shall be determined based on satisfactory completion of at least:

- (b) Eighteen semester or 27 quarter hours of academic credit since the beginning of the previous fall term or since the beginning of the certifying institution's preceding regular two semesters or three quarters (hours earned during the summer may not be used to fulfill this requirement) (see Bylaw 14.4.3.1.4);
- (c) Six semester or six quarter hours of academic credit during the preceding regular academic term (e.g., fall semester, winter quarter) in which the student-athlete has been enrolled full time at any collegiate institution (see Bylaw 14.4.3.4.3 for postseason certification).

**14.4.3.1.7 Hours Earned or Accepted for Degree Credit.** The calculation of credit hours under the progress-toward-degree regulation (Bylaw 14.4.3.1) shall be based on hours earned or accepted for degree credit at the certifying institution in a student-athlete's specific baccalaureate degree program, as follows:

- (a) During the first two years of enrollment, a student-athlete may use credits acceptable toward any of the institution's degree programs;
- (b) By the beginning of the third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a student-athlete shall be required to have designated a program of studies leading toward a specific baccalaureate degree. From that point, the credits used to meet the progress-toward-degree requirements must be degree credit toward the student's designated degree program;
- (c) A student-athlete who changes his or her designated degree program may comply with the progress-toward-degree requirements if:
  - (1) The change in programs is documented appropriately by the institution's academic authorities;
  - (2) The credits earned prior to the change are acceptable toward the degree previously sought; and
  - (3) The credits earned from the time of the change are acceptable toward the new desired degree.
- (d) Once a student-athlete has begun his or her third year of enrollment (fifth semester or seventh quarter), a course may not be used to fulfill the credit-hour requirements for meeting progress toward degree if the student ultimately must repeat the course to fulfill the requirements of the student's major, even if the course fulfills an elective component of the student-athlete's degree program.

**16.8.1 Permissible.** An institution, conference or the NCAA may provide actual and necessary expenses to a student-athlete to represent the institution in practice and competition (including expenses for activities/travel that are incidental to practice or competition). In order to receive competition-related expenses, the student-athlete must be eligible for competition.