



October 12, 2021

VIA EMAIL

President William D. Underwood
Mercer University
1400 Coleman Avenue
Macon, Georgia 31207

RE: *Mercer University* – Case No. 01116

Dear President Underwood:

I have received and reviewed your letter to Matt Mikrut of October 5, 2021, reporting violations of NCAA Bylaws 19.01.3 and 19.8.1.3 in the above referenced matter.

As you are aware, on September 30, 2021, the Division I Committee on Infractions (COI) released its infractions decision involving Mercer University. As the chief hearing officer in that case, I was designated to announce the COI's decision via a telephonic press conference. Before the press conference commenced, I was informed that Mercer had released a statement concerning the COI's decision in Case No. 01116 that was publicly published. Although Mercer has self-reported that violation, this public letter of reprimand shall serve to advise Mercer and all institutions that they must refrain from public announcements or disclosures regarding COI decisions until the appropriate time and a failure to do so may be met with additional violations and penalties.

NCAA Bylaws 19.01.3 and 19.8.1.3 specifically limit the timing of public announcements and disclosures regarding COI infraction cases and decisions. These bylaws are critical to the COI's process of releasing and announcing its infractions decisions. Failure to meet these requirements undermines and inhibits the COI's ability to effectively manage and resolve its case docket and ensure the professional and civil decorum of all parties appearing before it. *See* Bylaw 19.3.6-(j).

Although I appreciate Mercer's prompt acknowledgement of the violations of these bylaws and corrective measures that Mercer has put in place (i.e., requiring written presidential approval for statements and increasing education to public relations staff member), there are aspects of the original release that are troubling, including certain factual assertions and an inaccurate portrayal of the factual timeline. To be clear, parties are free to disagree with the COI's decision, but parties' positions must be in response to the COI's public announcement and explanation. That was not the case in this matter.

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While the COI's response in this case is limited to a public reprimand, future violations of public disclosure requirements may be met with more significant penalties such as extensions of probation, fines, or other penalties contemplated under Bylaw 19 that the COI finds appropriate.

With this public reprimand, the COI considers Mercer's public disclosure violation closed.

Sincerely,



David M. Roberts, Special Advisor to the Director of Athletics
University of Southern California
NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions
Chair

DR:mm

cc: Mr. James Cole
Mr. Matthew Hall
Mr. John Peach
Commissioner Jim Schaus
NCAA Division I Committee on Infractions