The 2018 NCAA Division III Conference Commissioners Survey
Initial Report – April 17, 2018

This survey provides Division III conference commissioners an opportunity to express a conference opinion concerning the current and future policies and priorities of the division. The responses will help the Division III Presidents Council, Management Council, Strategic Planning and Finance Committee, and the other governance committees assess membership satisfaction with existing Division III principles, legislative standards, programs and services. The survey can hopefully serve as a platform for healthy discussion of pertinent Division III issues in your conference.

Responses were submitted electronically and are confidential. Findings have been aggregated to an appropriate level when reporting to ensure this confidentiality. Participation was voluntary. Rounding of percentages has been used throughout the report. For that reason, sums of percentages may not equal 100 percent.

43 Division III multi-sport conferences were solicited and 29 responses (67 percent) were received and are included in this report of findings.

SECTIONS

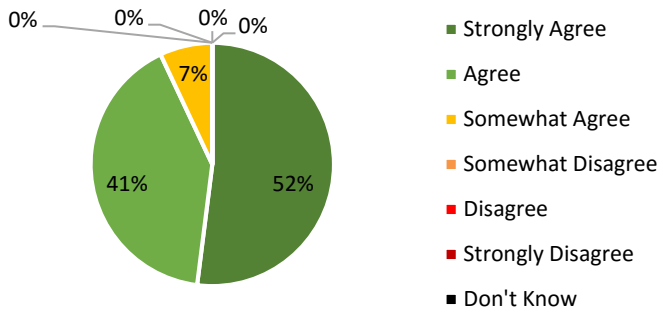
Percent of conferences where each position/title contributed to the completion of the survey.

Conference Commissioner	100%
Associate/Assistant Commissioner	14%
Other	7%

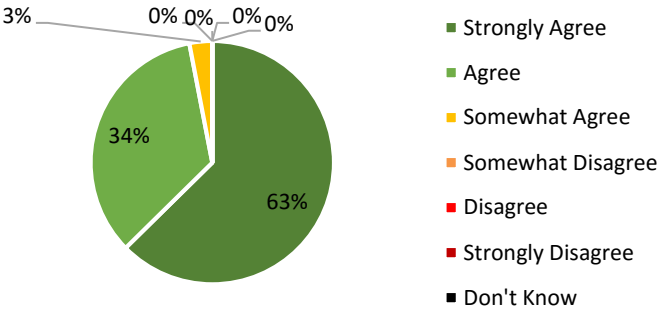
I. CURRENT PERCEPTIONS

The following items were designed to address the conference's current state of satisfaction with Division III.

In Division III, there is an appropriate opportunity for student-athletes to pursue academics, athletics and other interests.

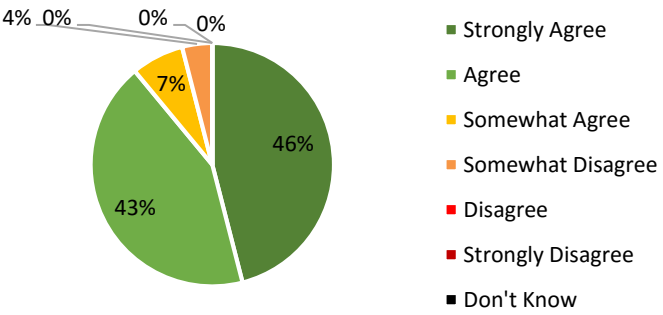


In Division III, athletics participation is just as valuable to student development as any other co-curricular activity promoting comprehensive learning.

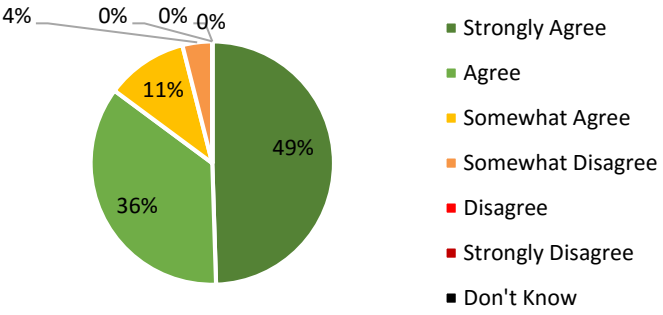


Health and Safety

Our conference is aware of NCAA Sport Science Institute - developed education, resources and programming to help protect the health and well-being of Division III student-athletes.

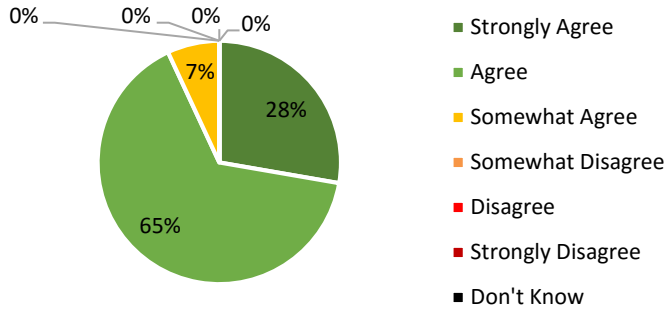


It is beneficial for Division III to have national standards (e.g. guidelines, policies) in the areas of health and safety for student-athletes.

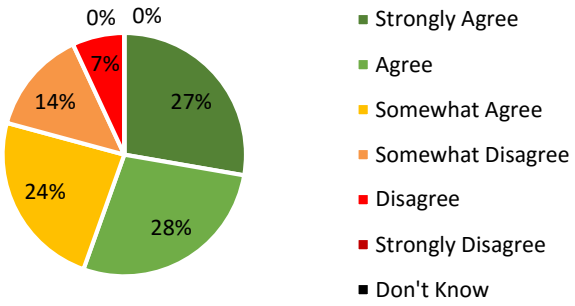


Governance

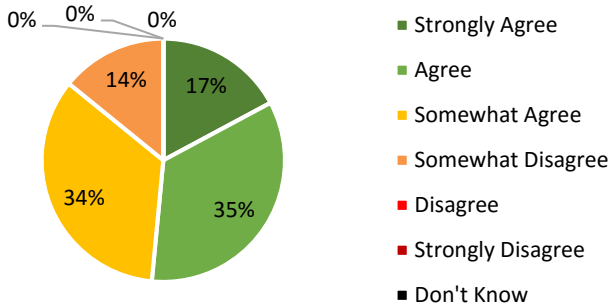
Our conference has a good understanding of the significant governance issues facing Division III.



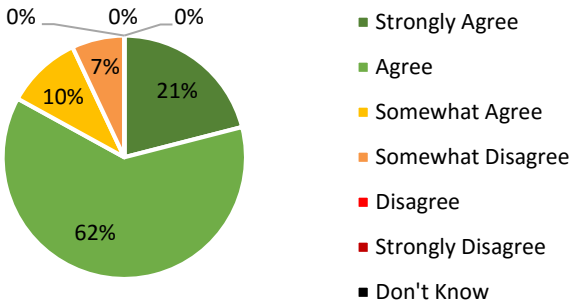
Our conference has an adequate voice in the Division III governance structure.



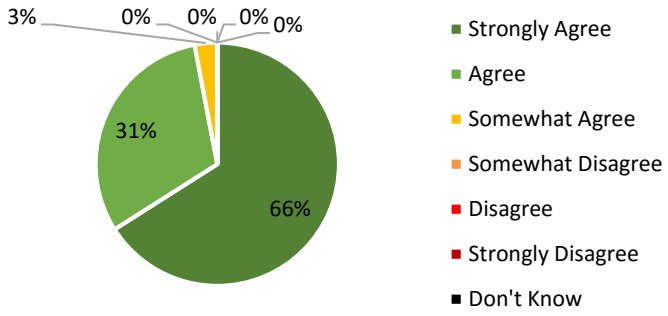
Student-athlete input via the National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is clearly communicated throughout the Division III governance structure.



Our conference trusts the individuals who serve on the Presidents and Management Councils to make decisions in the best interest of Division III.

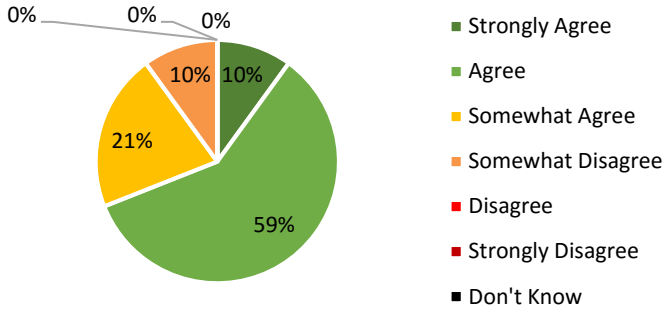


When we vote at the NCAA Convention, we have a clear understanding on what the legislative proposal would accomplish.

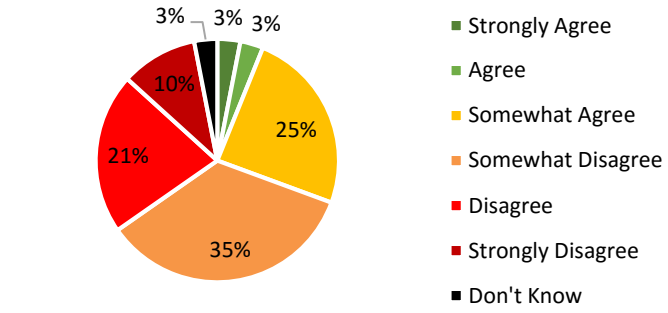


Legislative Standards

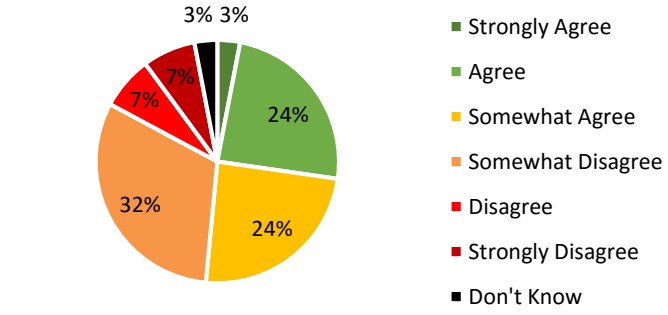
Current Division III legislative standards are consistent with our conference's perspective on intercollegiate athletics.



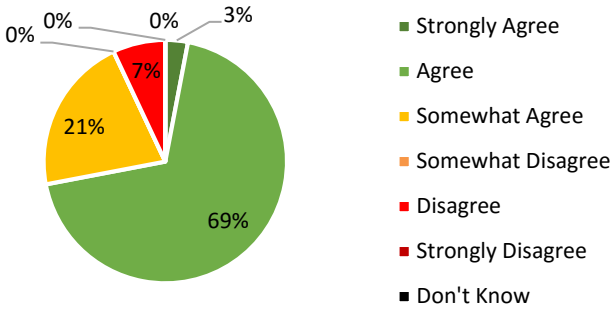
Division III legislative standards should generally become less permissive and more restrictive.



Division III legislative standards should generally become more permissive and less restrictive.



Generally, current Division III legislative standards are appropriate.



The Division III Budget

Division III's current annual budget is approximately $32 million. Per existing policy, approximately 75% ($24 million) is being spent on championships and 25% ($8 million) is being spent on non-championship initiatives such as the conference grant program and student-athlete leadership and internship programs.

Does your conference believe that the current Division III allocations (75/25) are appropriate?

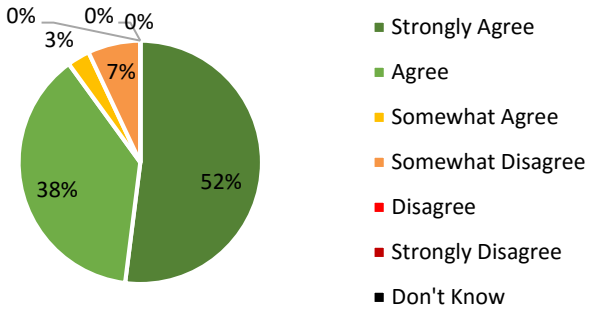
Yes, current expenditures are appropriately balanced.	59%
No, we should allocate more to championships.	28%
No, we should allocate more to non-championship initiatives.	14%

II. THE ATHLETICS ENTERPRISE ON CAMPUS

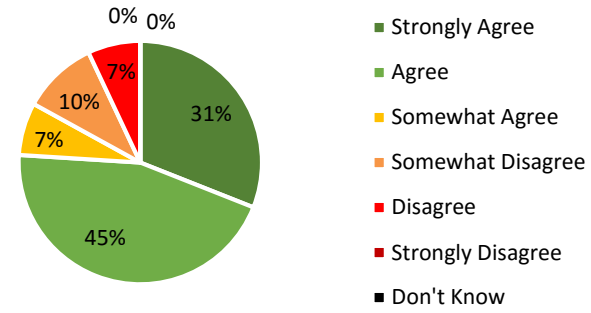
For many of your member institutions, student-athletes make up an important part of the overall student body (26 percent on average). As such, issues related to student-athlete recruitment and enrollment continue to be topics of discussion among the Division III membership.

Structure and Administration of the Athletics Department

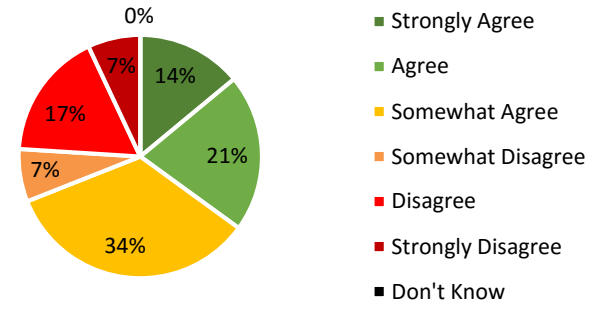
A commitment to sport equity (i.e., equitable treatment of all sports in areas such as finance, staffing, facilities, recruiting and scheduling) should be a key component of any Division III athletics department mission.



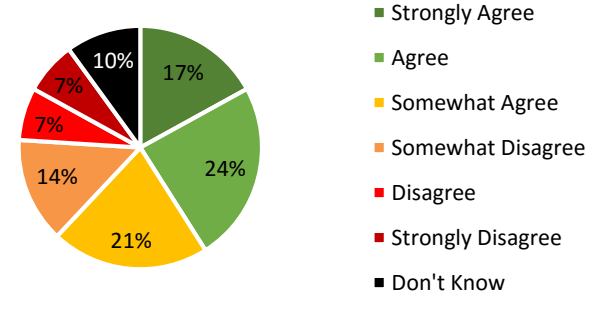
A department policy to prioritize certain sports ahead of others in areas such as finance, staffing, facilities, recruiting and scheduling is not appropriate.



In the past four years, budget issues have negatively impacted our member institutions' athletics program (e.g. cut sports, reduce participation opportunities, reduce staffing).

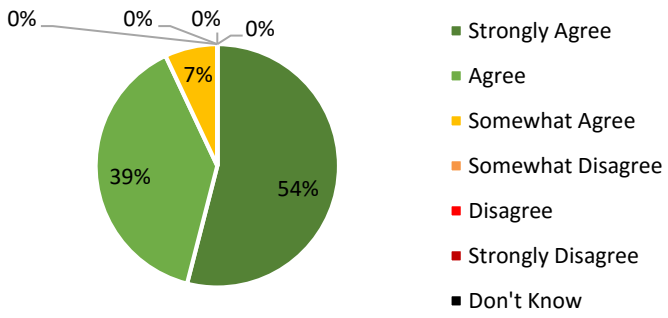


In the next four years, we anticipate budget issues will negatively impact our member institutions' athletics program (e.g. cut sports, reduce participation opportunities, reduce staffing).

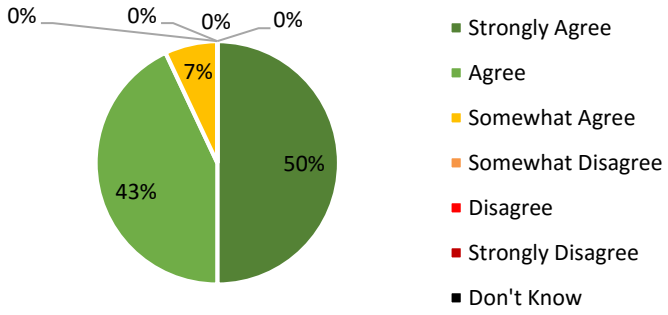


Admissions for Student-Athletes

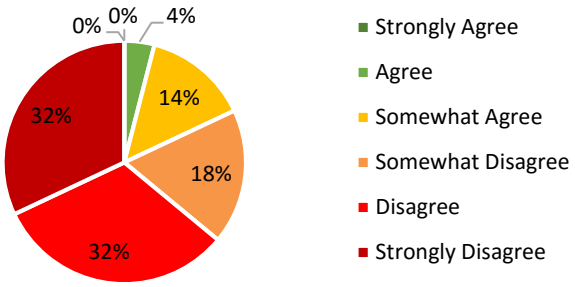
Admitted student-athletes should fit the general academic profile of all incoming first-year students.



Admission policies for student-athletes should be consistent with the general student body.

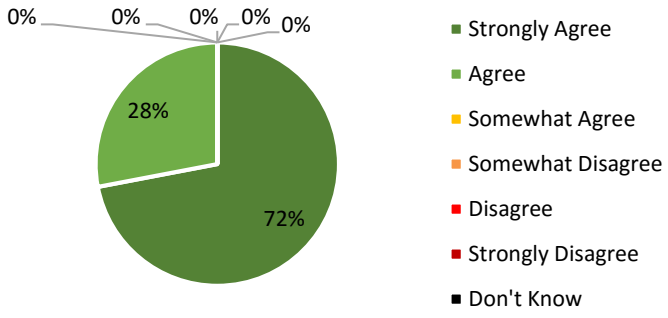


It is appropriate to admit students based on their athletics participation and/or ability who would not otherwise meet minimum admissions standards.

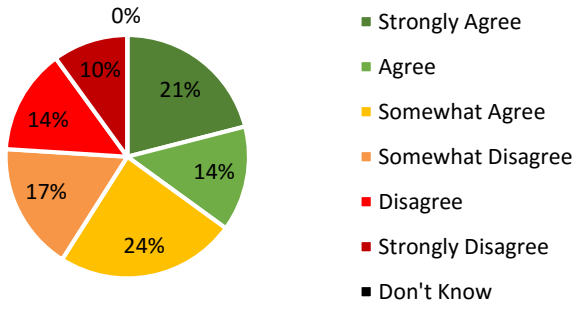


Financial Aid for Student-Athletes

We agree with the current legislation that student financial aid decisions made by the admissions, financial aid departments and other campus units should be entirely independent and free of influence from the athletics department.

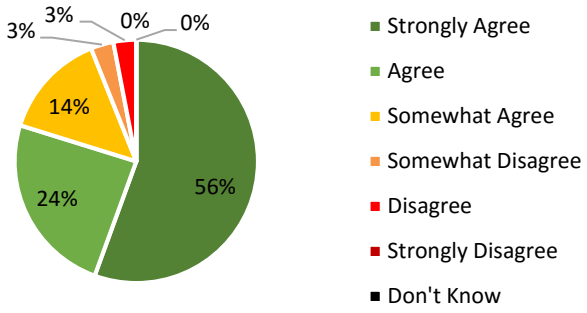


The current prohibition of considering athletics leadership (e.g., team captain) in the awarding of financial aid to student-athletes is appropriate.

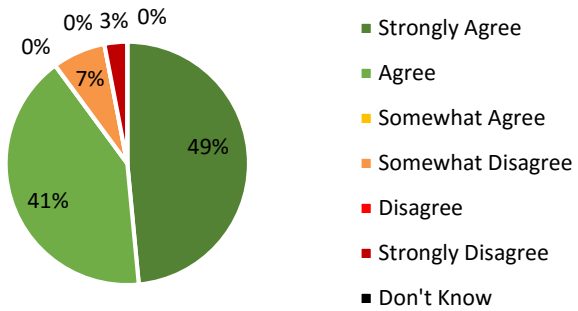


Enrollment and Retention of Student-Athletes

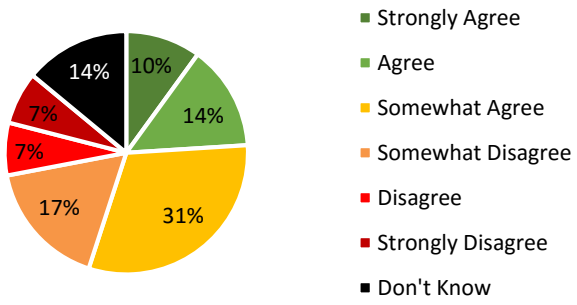
Recruitment of student-athletes is a key component in enrollment management strategies at our member institutions.



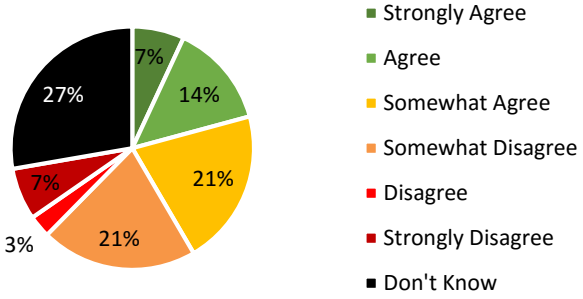
Athletics helps in establishing a diverse student-body for our member institutions (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics).



In the past four years, our member institutions have increased institutional budget allocations to athletics to specifically leverage enrollment of student-athletes as part of overall enrollment strategies.



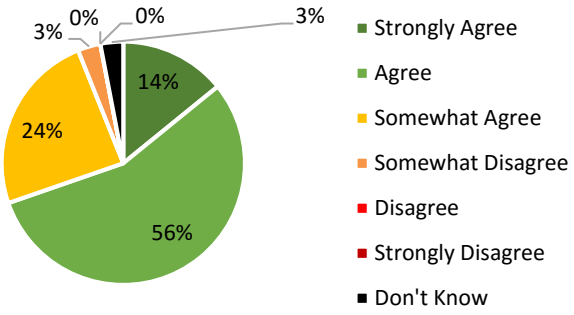
In the next four years, our member institutions plan to increase institutional budget allocations to athletics to specifically leverage enrollment of student-athletes as part of overall enrollment strategies.



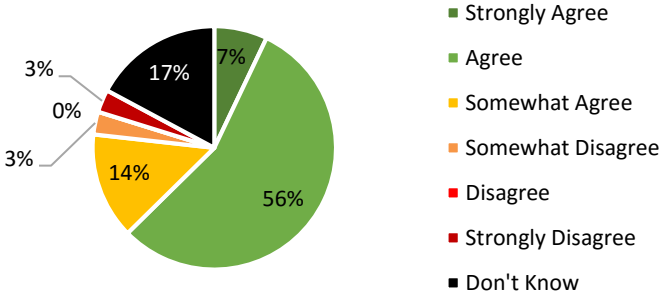
III. FINANCIAL AID REGULATIONS

Division III is the only NCAA division that prohibits the awarding of financial aid based on athletics leadership, ability, participation or performance. To ensure adherence to this principle, Division III enacted legislation in 2004 that requires institutions to participate in an annual financial aid reporting program. Each year, all active, provisional and reclassifying members must submit reports that are subject to review by the Financial Aid Committee. Over the 13 years of the program, 219 institutions have been selected for a Level II review by the committee and 99 of those institutions have been sanctioned to some degree for violations found through the Financial Aid Reporting Program. Additionally, Division III has developed and distributed educational resources to promote appropriate communication across campus constituencies and help institutions ensure compliance.

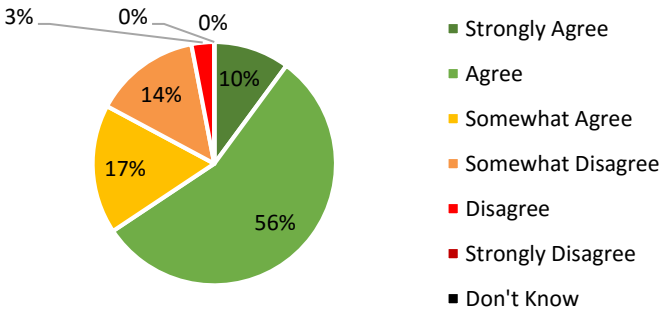
The NCAA provides an appropriate level of education relative to financial aid legislation.



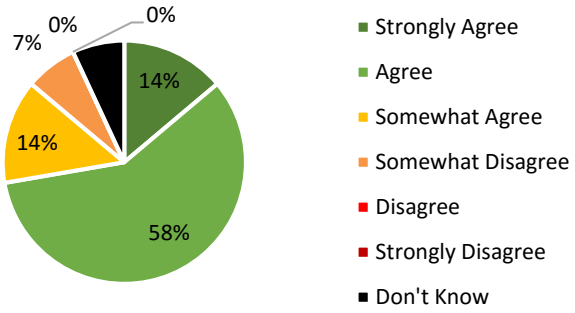
The Division III Financial Aid Reporting Program is a useful tool to help institutions assess compliance with NCAA bylaws.



In our conference, there is an appropriate level of understanding of Division III financial aid compliance across campus constituencies.



In our conference, we use the available resources to help ensure compliance with Division III financial aid regulations.



Institutional sanctions imposed by the Committee on Infractions beyond those focused on education (e.g. probation, public reprimand, ineligibility for NCAA championship events) for financial aid violations are: (Percent of Conferences)

Appropriate	75%
Too strict	4%
Not strict enough	21%

IV. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, RETENTION AND ELIGIBILITY

Division III emphasizes the educational value of athletics participation and focuses on the academic success of its student-athletes. Institutional autonomy in such matters as academic performance, academic progress and continuing eligibility has been the guiding philosophical and legislative principle of the division, with limited NCAA oversight.

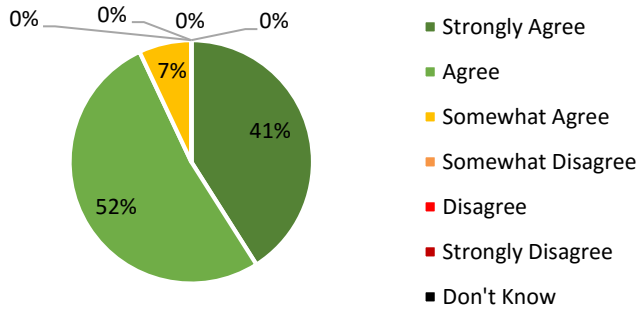
Current legislation requires only that Division III student-athletes be enrolled in a minimum fulltime program of study (12 semester or quarter hours) leading to a baccalaureate degree.

Recent studies continue to show that student-athletes at Division III institutions graduate, on average, at a higher rate than their student-body peers. Studies also show lower graduation rates for football and African-American student-athletes.

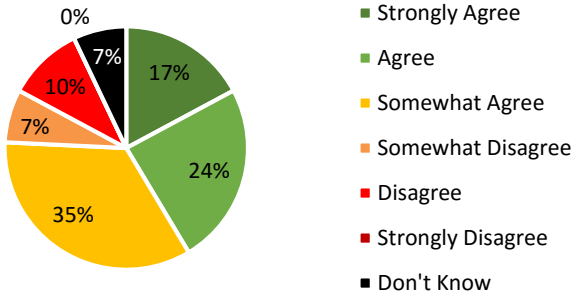
Responses to the questions below will provide additional assistance in evaluating the effectiveness of current principles, related programs and legislation.

Academic Performance and Retention

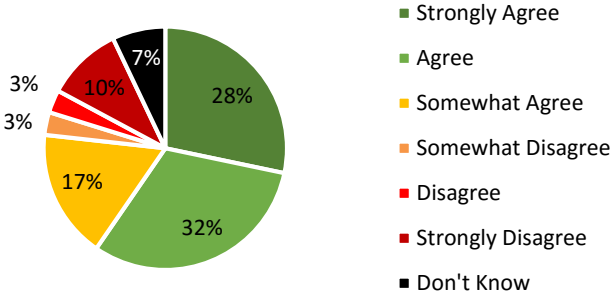
The academic performance of student-athletes should be, at minimum, consistent with the general student-body.



The current voluntary graduation rate reporting program is a useful and relevant tool to assess the retention of Division III student-athletes.

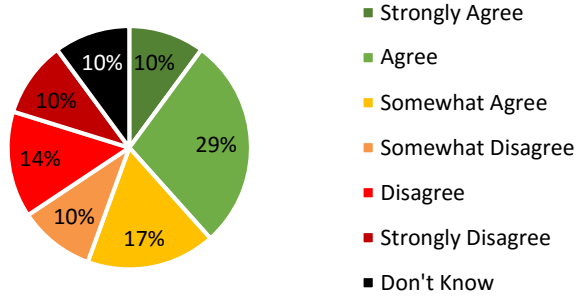


The Division should consider requiring institutions to submit standardized student-athlete graduation rate information on an annual basis to the NCAA.

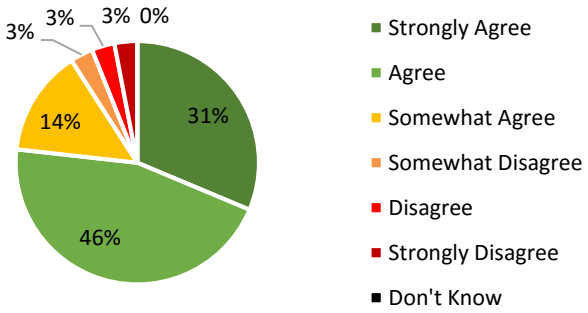


Eligibility

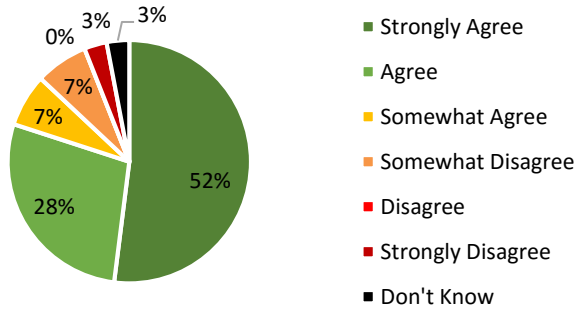
The athletic participation history of all Division III student-athletes should be confirmed by the NCAA prior to participation as is currently done at the Division I and II levels (i.e. NCAA Eligibility Center).



Division III should continue its primary focus on intercollegiate athletics as a four-year undergraduate experience.



A year of eligibility should continue to be defined by a season of participation rather than a season of competition (i.e. current “red-shirting prohibition”).



V. SPORTS SPONSORSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

One of the key tenets of the division is that its member institutions offer a broad-based athletics program by maximizing the number and variety of athletics opportunities for students. On average, Division III institutions sponsor approximately 18 sports (nine for women and nine for men) with an average undergraduate enrollment of approximately 2,700 students. Additionally, one in four students, on average, participates in intercollegiate athletics. Current regulations require institutions to sponsor a minimum of 12 sports (six men's and six women's) with an allowance for schools with enrollment less than 1,000 (i.e. 10 sports – five for men and five for women) and single-gender institutions.

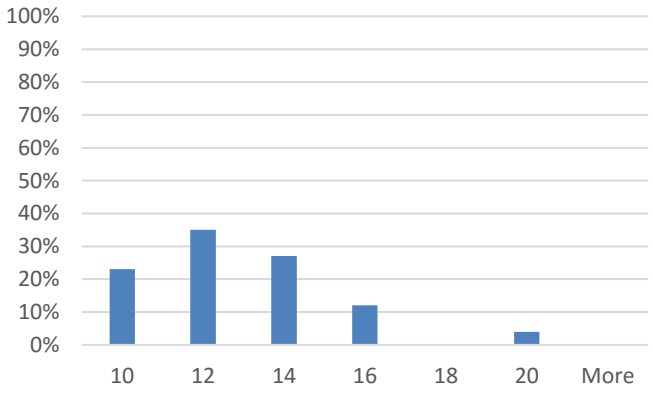
In addition, institutions are required to complete an Institutional Self-Study Guide (ISSG) every five years. Further, institutions are required to attend a Regional Rules Seminar at a minimum of once every three years and attend the NCAA national convention annually.

The current sports sponsorship requirement includes an allowance for schools with an enrollment less than 1,000. They are required to sponsor 10 sports - five for men and five for women.

Is this allowance appropriate? (Percent of Conferences)

Yes	90%
No	10%

Indicate your conference's preference for a <u>minimum</u> sports sponsorship standard assuming the current allowance for schools with small enrollments and single-gender institutions remains. (Percent of Conferences)

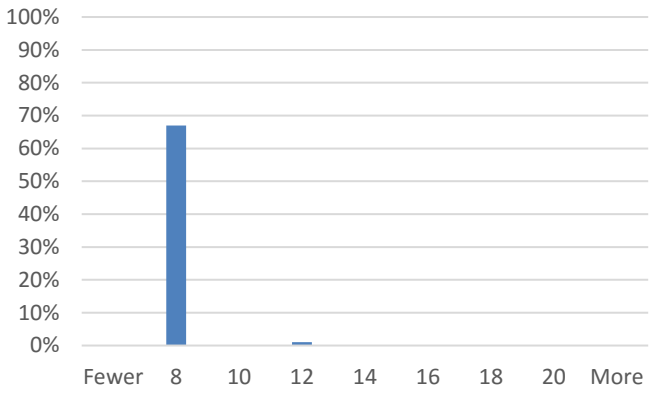


10% of conferences indicated the current allowance of 10 sports - five for men and five for women - for schools with an enrollment less than 1,000 is inappropriate.

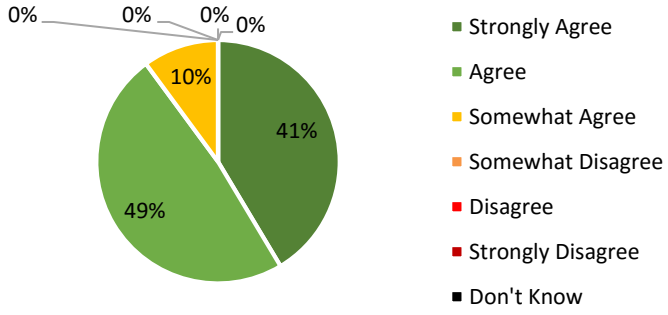
Preferred Allowance (Percent of Conferences)

No allowance	100%
8 sports	0%

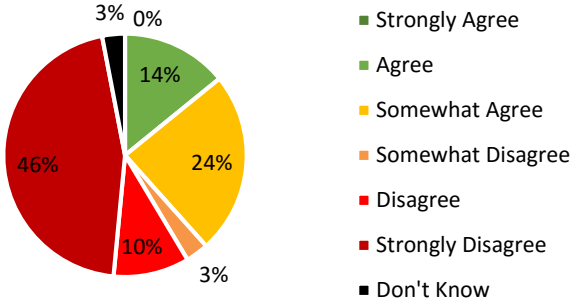
Indicate your school's preference for a minimum sports sponsorship standard assuming the allowance you indicated in the question above. (Percent of Institutions)



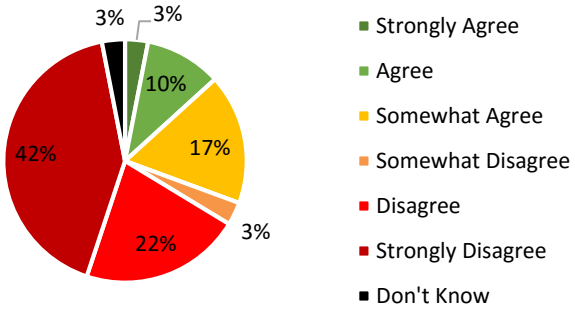
NCAA staff-led rules seminars are effective educational opportunities for our conference's staff.



The Conference Self-Study Guide (CSSG) is a useful assessment tool for our conference and member institutions.



The requirement to complete the Conference Self-Study Guide (CSSG) every five years is appropriate.

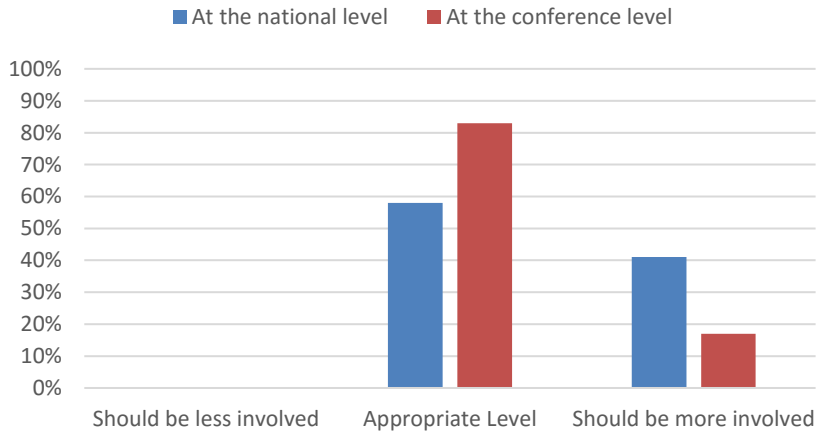


VI. CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

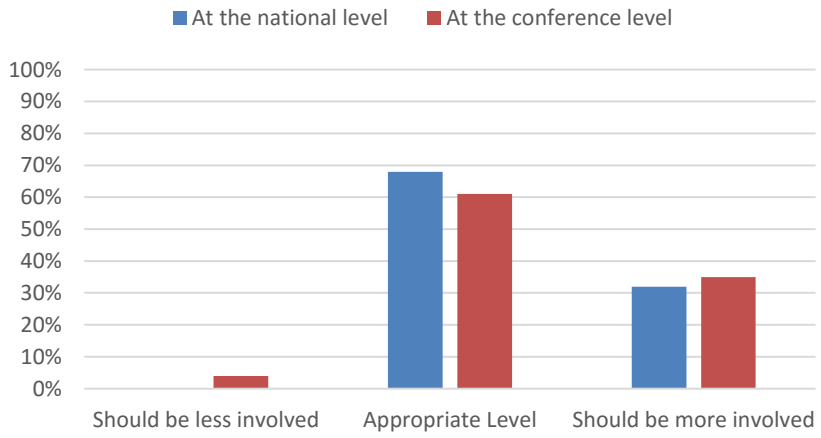
As with most issues on a college campus, the chancellor or president is ultimately responsible for institutional actions. As the chief decision-maker on a campus, chancellors or presidents also have a defined leadership role within the NCAA governance structure. The Presidents Council, the Presidents Advisory Group, service on the Management Council, and service on a number of additional governance committees are all avenues for chancellors and presidents to provide leadership in the division. Each Division III conference is also required to have as its ultimate authority a presidential governing board.

The feedback requested below will provide assistance in further defining the appropriate level of involvement by chancellors and presidents or other administrators who are responsible for overseeing the administration of athletics at Division III institutions.

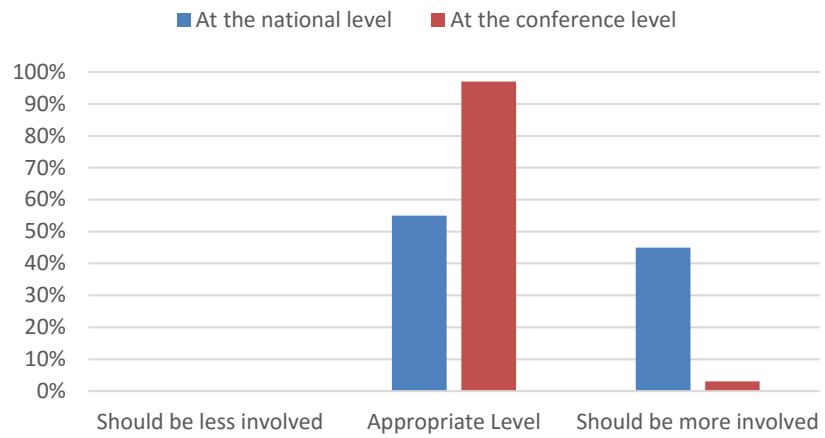
Indicate the level of involvement of your Chancellors or Presidents in the governance of Division III athletics:



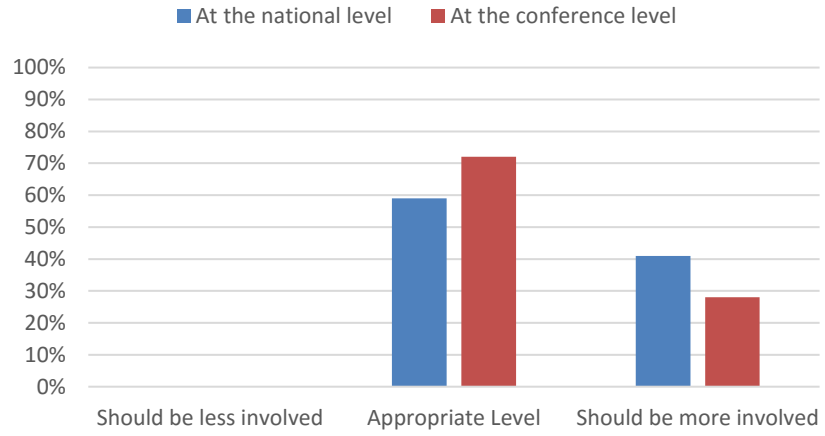
Indicate the level of involvement of your Athletics Direct Reports/ADRs, if applicable (e.g. Chief Academic Officer, Chief Student Affairs Officer, or Dean) in the governance of Division III athletics:



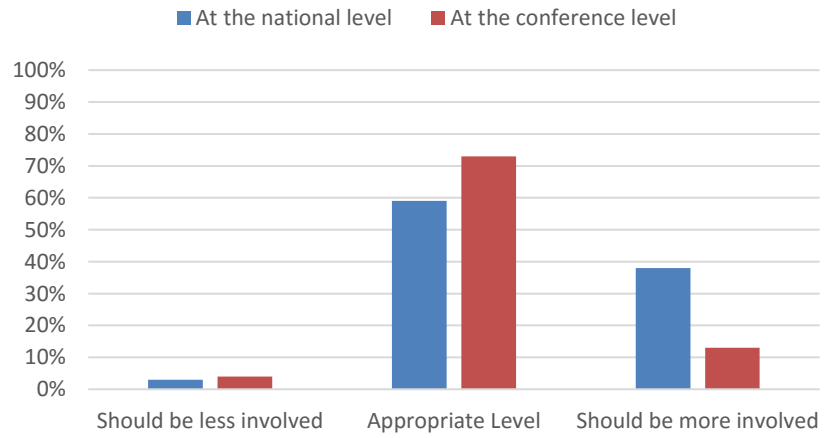
Indicate the level of involvement of your Directors of Athletics in the governance of Division III athletics:



Indicate the level of involvement of your Senior Woman Administrators (SWAs) in the governance of Division III Athletics:



Indicate the level of involvement of your Faculty Athletics Representatives (FARs) in the governance of Division III athletics:

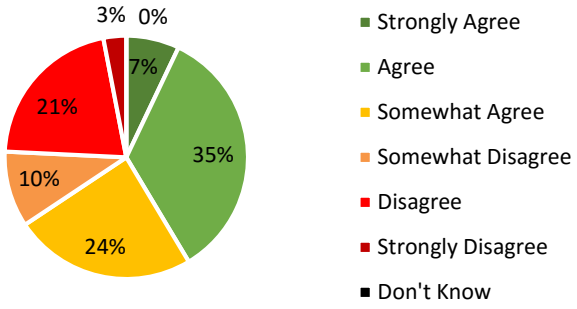


VII. NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

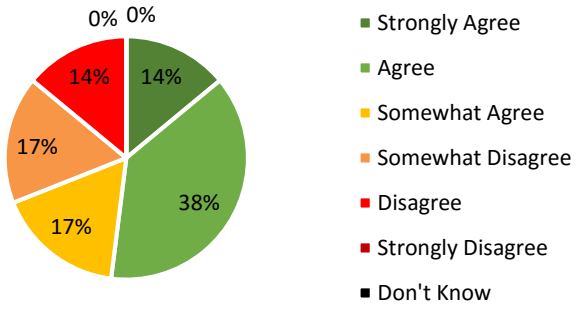
National championships are an important component of the programmatic offerings of Division III. Championships funding represents approximately 75% of the divisional budget (approximately $24 million for the 2017-18 academic year). At present, entrance to the national championship is either through a conference's automatic qualification slot (with related slots allocated to independents) or through at-large bids. Each national championship (with the exception of football) is conducted within a three-week timeframe. Current championships policy provides one berth for every six and a half institutions sponsoring a team sport.

Philosophy

The ultimate measure of success for your conference's athletics programs is participation in NCAA championships.

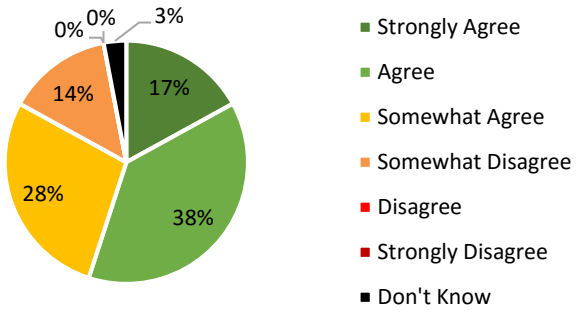


Whenever possible, Division III championships events should occur at on-campus facilities as opposed to off-campus facilities.

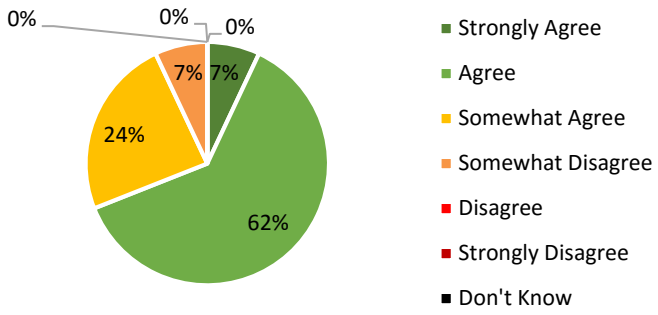


Current Policy

The current policy where NCAA championships are available to conferences via automatic qualification (Pool A), for independent institutions plus institutions from conferences that do not meet the automatic qualification requirements (Pool B) and via at-large bids (Pool C) is appropriate.

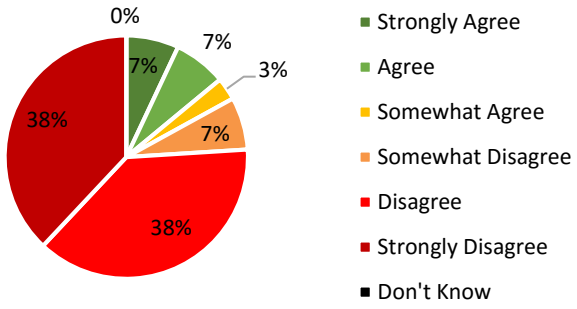


The current policy of conducting mid-week contests in order to complete the national championship in three weeks is appropriate.

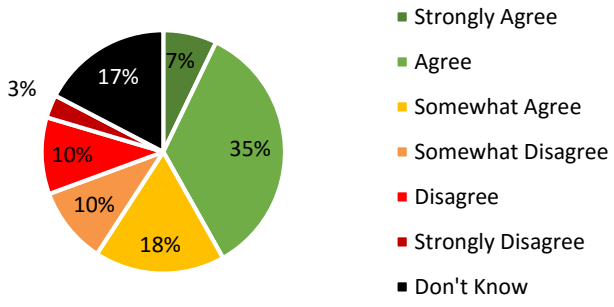


Potential Policy Changes

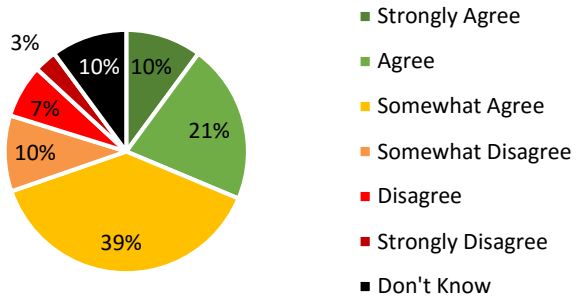
Participation in NCAA championships should be available to conference champions only (i.e., automatic qualification only with no at-large bids) with appropriate access for non-automatic qualifying conferences and independent institutions.



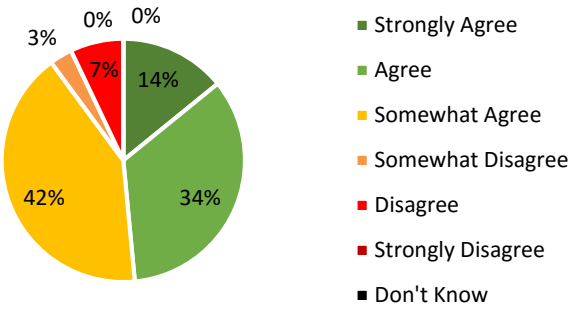
Increase the per diem (e.g. meals, lodging) for participating in championships beyond the planned increase to $100 in 2020-21.



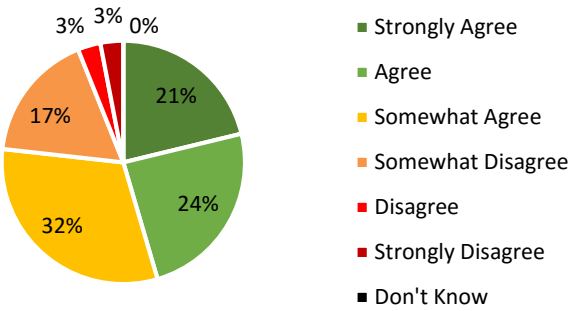
Increase the number of participants selected for individual-team sport championships.



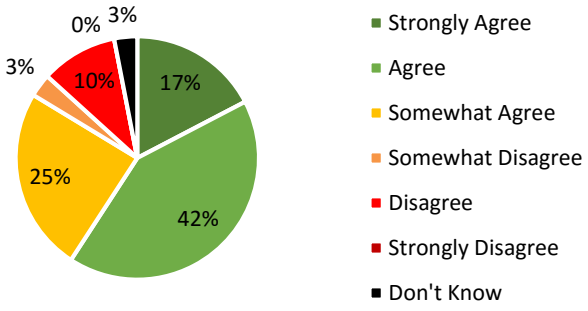
Institutions in Division III championships should be reimbursed to send additional coaching personnel for student-athletes who require technical coaching (e.g., diving, track and field).



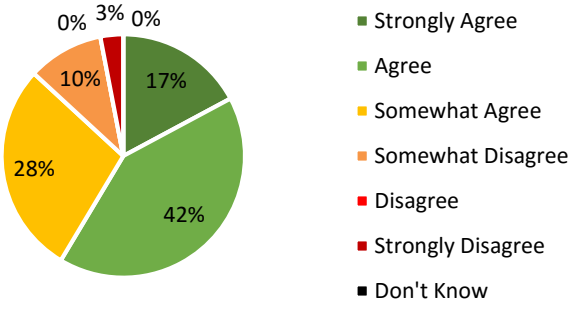
Travel party sizes for championship competition and related budgets should be expanded to include additional student-athletes eligible to compete (i.e., expand the squad size).



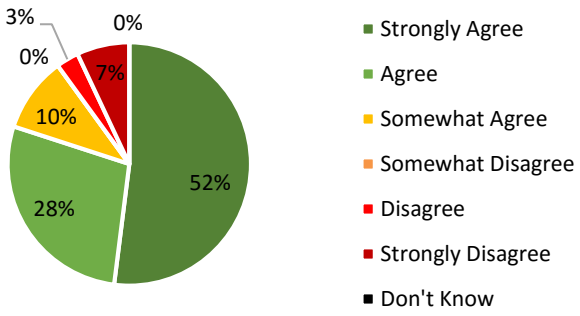
Reinstate host honorariums for non-predetermined sites.



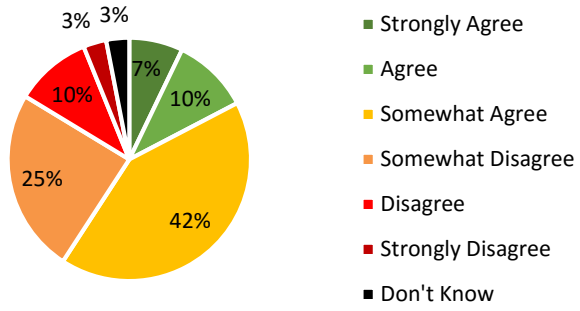
Championships bracketing principles should be amended for preliminary round site selection to guarantee top regionally ranked teams have the opportunity to host in the first round.



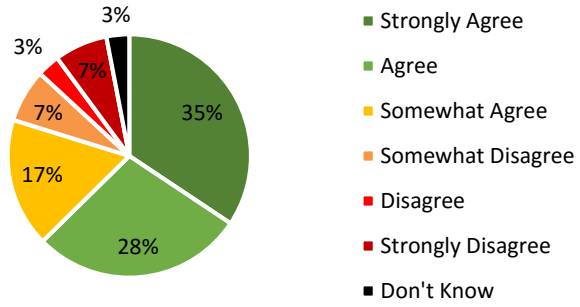
Championships bracketing principles should be amended to guarantee conference opponents do not play each other in the first round of competition.



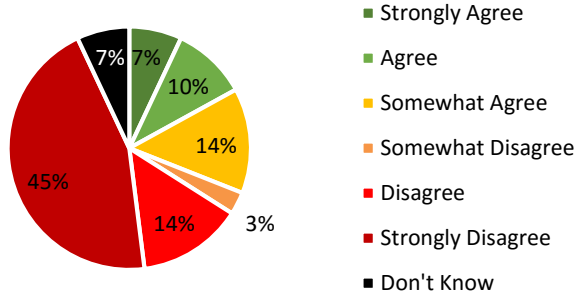
Add a day of rest at finals sites between semifinals and finals competition in team sports.



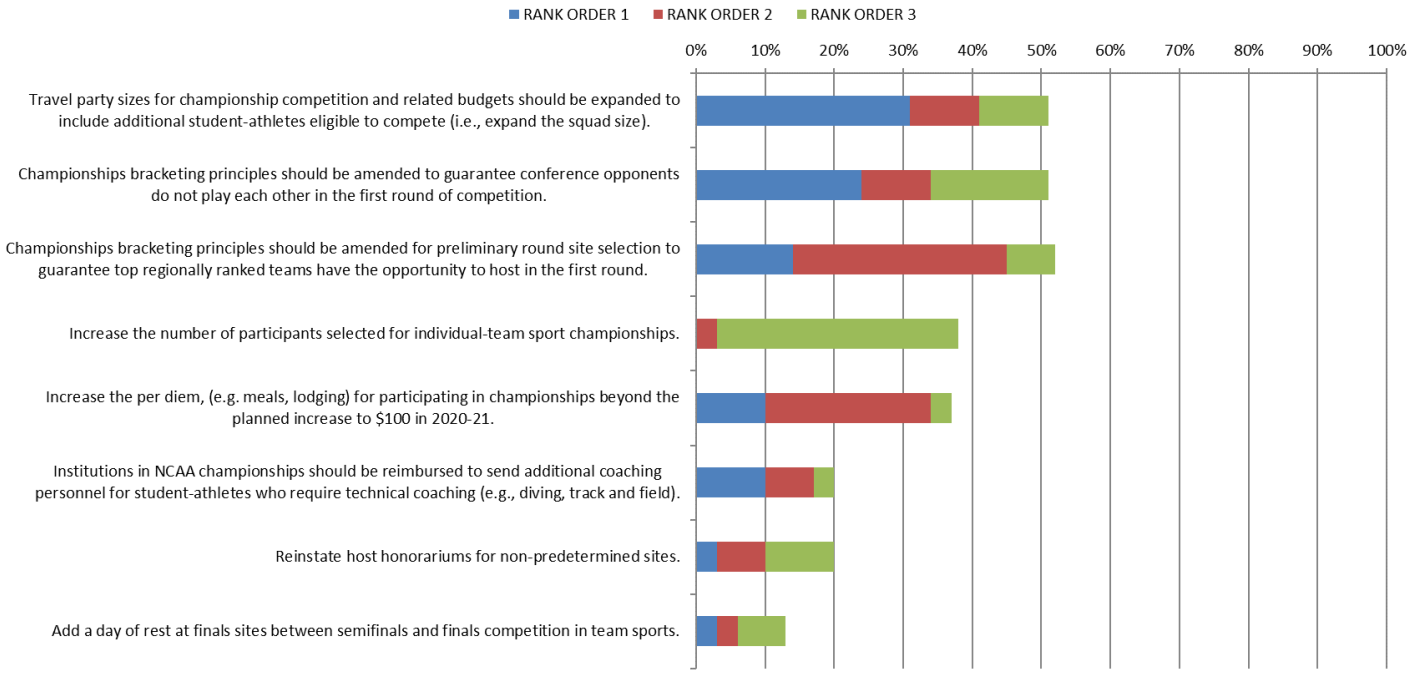
Division III should consider a minimum regular-season competition requirement for conferences to receive an AQ.



Division III should consider legislation that would allow alcohol sales at all Division III national championship events that meet defined criteria (e.g., beer and wine only, facility has existing capability to sell, established administrative policies).



Of the following 8 championship policies and/or potential enhancements, please rank the <u>top three</u> (3) in terms of importance to your conference. (Percent of Conferences)



At present the limit for brackets is 64 teams (other than football). In addition there is a three-week championships structure to establish reasonable limits on frequency of play and related travel as well as a consideration of the academic commitments for student-athletes.

Indicate your conference's preference for the maximum number of weeks allowed to conduct the championships.

1 week	0%
2 weeks	0%
3 weeks	83%
4 weeks	17%
5 weeks	0%
Longer	0%

The current championships access ratio in team sports stands at 1:6.5 with a limit for brackets of 64 teams. This ratio is used to determine the bracket sizes. With this ratio, there is one opportunity for every six and half teams participating in the sport. A higher ratio would mean fewer championships berths per number of institutions sponsoring a sport, while a lower ratio would mean a greater number of berths with higher championships costs.

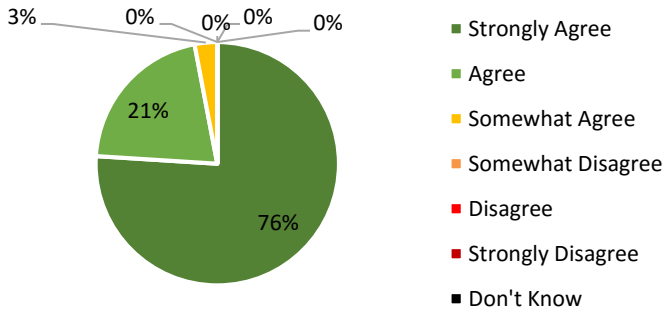
Indicate your conference's preference for a championships team sport access ratio.

Lower	3%
1:5	0%
1:6	24%
1:6.5	59%
1:7	10%
1:8	3%
Higher	0%

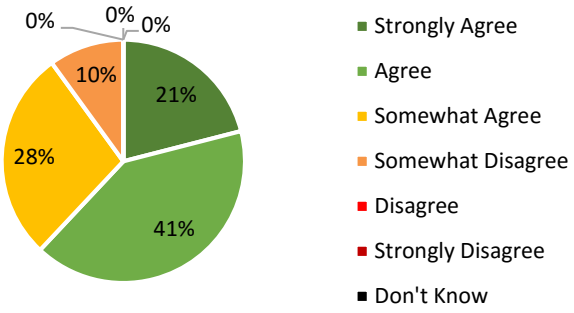
VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

As technology continues to change, the NCAA national office has attempted to keep pace with the methods used to communicate with the membership. The information requested below will assist in continuing to improve the national office's efforts to communicate effectively with the Division III membership.

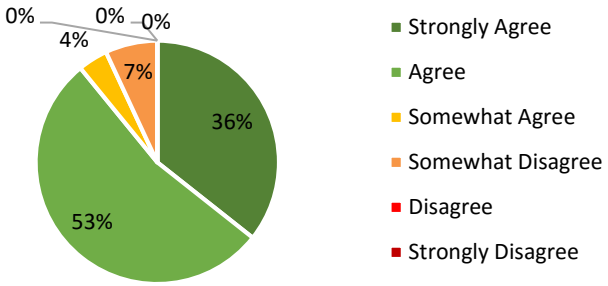
It is important for the national office to regularly communicate information regarding Division III activities (e.g. governance, AMA, championships, etc.).



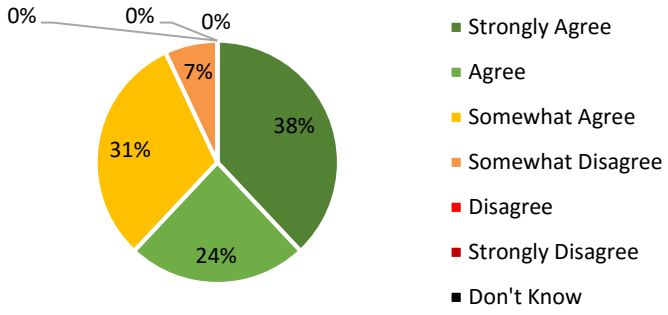
Information regarding Division III activities is clearly and concisely communicated to member institutions.



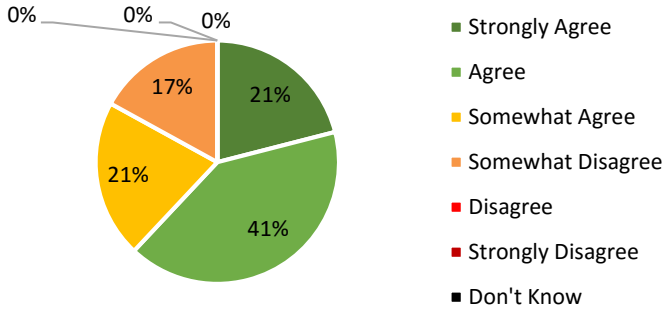
Our conference office staff is provided the opportunity to effectively communicate with the national office staff.



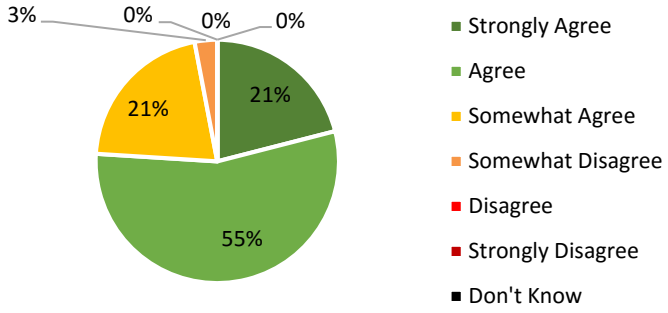
Our conference office staff is aware of where to obtain Division III information on NCAA.org.



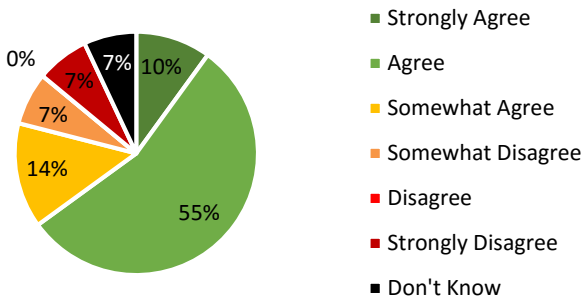
Our conference office staff is satisfied with the methods by which we currently receive Division III information from the NCAA.



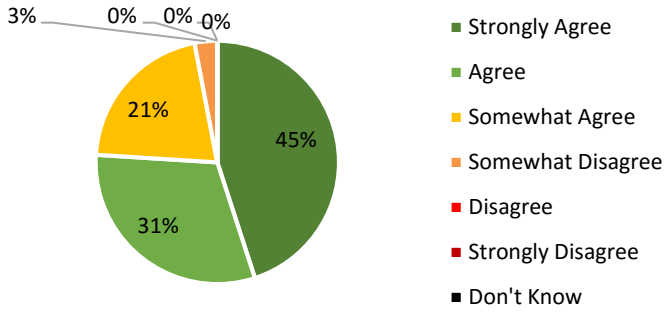
Our conference office staff is satisfied with the amount of Division III information we receive from the NCAA.



The national office efforts to engage the membership via Division III social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) are appropriate.



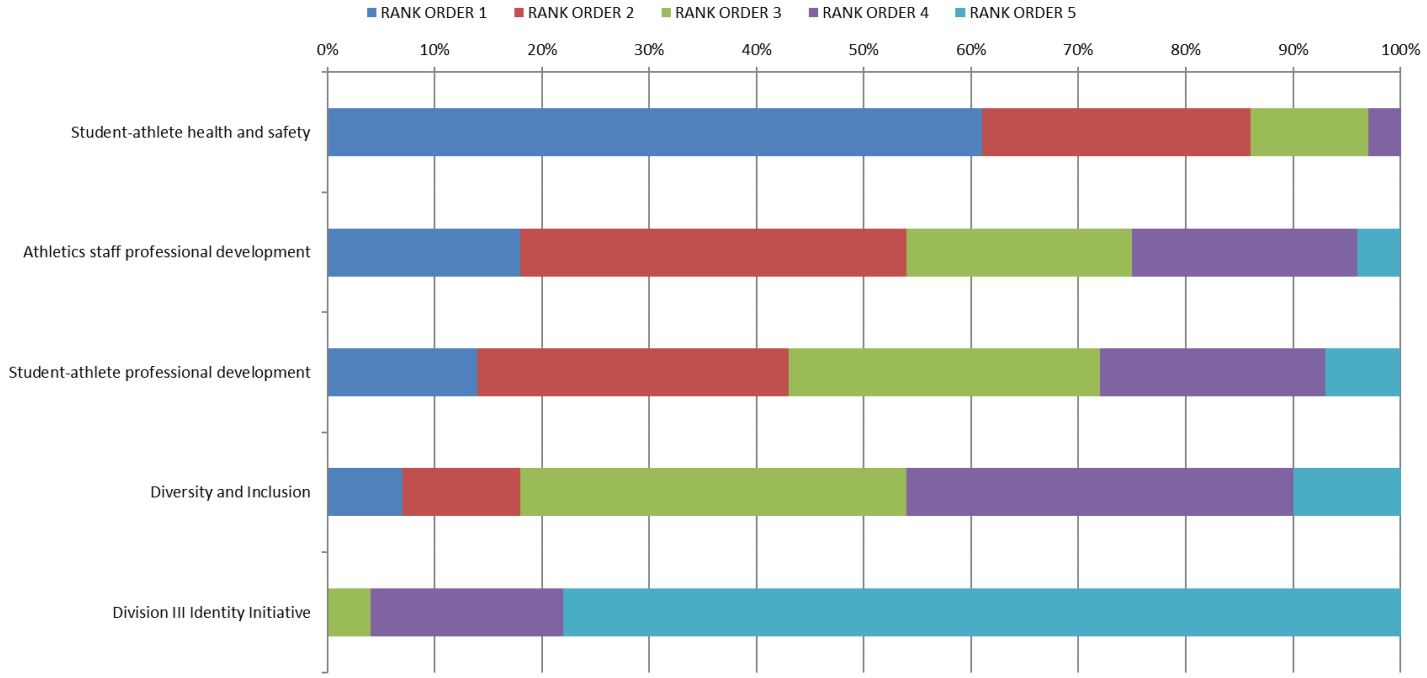
Our conference office's athletics communication staff/Sports Information Director plays an important role in communicating the Division III story.



IX. STRATEGIC PLANNING

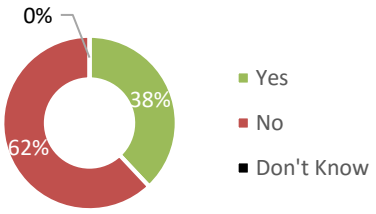
Approximately 75 percent of the Division III budget is devoted to support the division's 28 national championships. The other 25 percent of the division's budget supports member schools and conferences through non-championship programming, educational resources and initiatives in the areas of athletics staff professional development, student-athlete professional development, student-athlete health and safety, the Division III Identity Initiative, and diversity and inclusion.

Rank each of these non-championship programming areas (1 through 5) in importance to you as a Division III conference. (Percent Conferences)

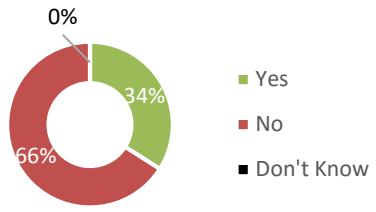


For each of the following 13 current programs, indicate if your conference has received funding for or participated in that program **in the last 5 years**.

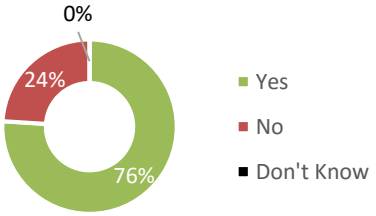
Ethnic Minority and Women's Intern Program. Two-year grants for Division III institutions and conferences to create 10-month full-time internship opportunities for minorities and women.



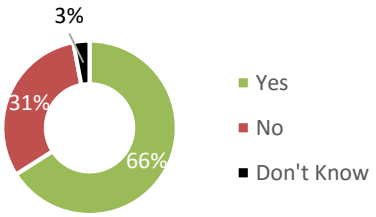
Strategic Alliance Matching Grant. Funding for Division III institutions and conferences to enhance gender and ethnic diversity through full-time professional positions in athletics administration.



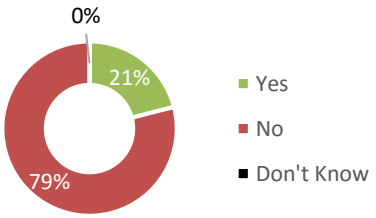
Sportsmanship Initiative. The goal of the "Gameday the DIII Way" sportsmanship and game environment program is to achieve better fan decorum at Division III athletics events by providing a consistent level of expectations and guest service throughout the division.



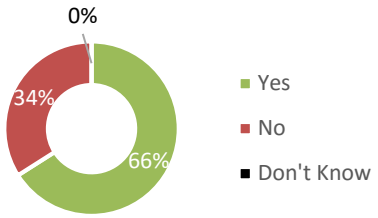
Division III Diversity Initiatives. Grants intended to increase opportunities in athletics administration for ethnic minorities and women. Initiatives include the Institute for Administrative Advancement, the SWA Program, the Student Immersion Program, and the Career Next Steps Program among others.



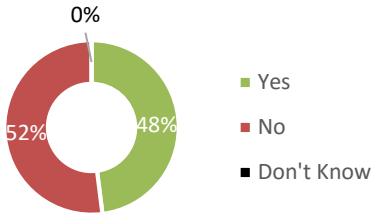
New Commissioner Orientation. Separate professional development programming designed to introduce new commissioners to NCAA reporting requirements, structures, best practices and resources.



D3Day at CoSIDA Convention. A collaborative effort to increase involvement by athletics communications and sports information directors in strategic planning at the campus, conference, regional and national levels and to improve or develop professional-development opportunities.



Special Olympics Partnership. A partnership to improve the lives of Special Olympics athletes through their involvement with Division III student-athletes while also fostering a mutual learning experience between Division III student-athletes and Special Olympics athletes.



X. DIVISION III WORKING GROUPS

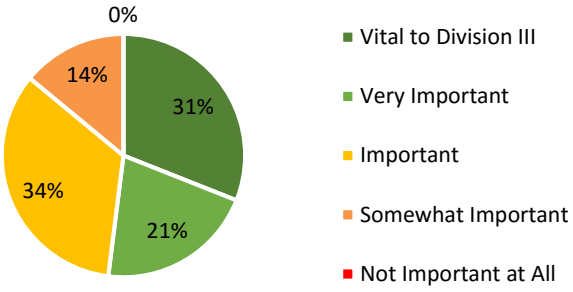
Division III regularly employs working groups to research and advise the governance structure across a range of areas. This approach facilitates the informed decision making that is a cornerstone of NCAA governance. Currently, there are four active Division III working groups.

Are working groups an effective tool for Division III?

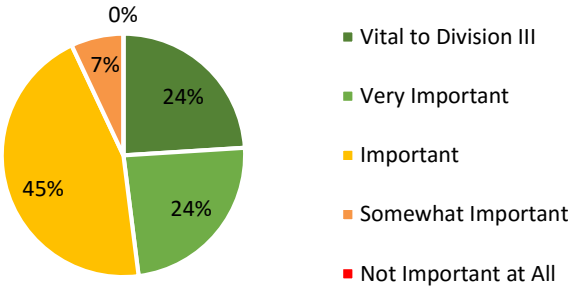
Yes	83%
No	0%
Don't Know	17%

Indicate how important each of the working groups are to Division III.

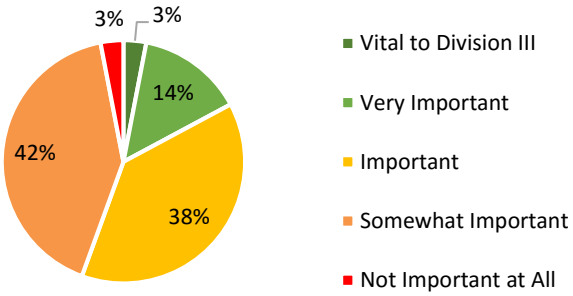
Diversity and Inclusion Working Group: The working group's charge is to assess the current diversity and inclusion landscape within Division III, evaluate current initiatives, and propose next steps (e.g., resources, new initiatives, policies, etc.).



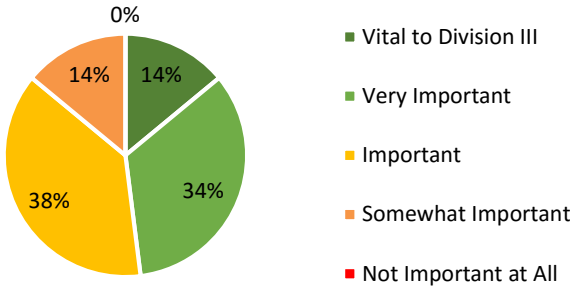
Sportsmanship and Game Environment Working Group: The working group's primary efforts focus on ways to enhance the Division III sportsmanship and game environment initiatives by identifying best practices in managing the game environment and providing helpful tools and resources for member institutions and conferences.



FAR Engagement Working Group: The working group's objective is to increase the engagement of Division III Faculty Athletics Representatives (FARs) at the institutional, conference and national levels. It seeks to accomplish this by utilizing data (both historical and newly collected) and the expertise of the working group and others to better define the components of engagement, determine the metrics to measure them, establish appropriate assessment benchmarks, develop best practice resources, and collaborate with appropriate groups to ensure consistency, effectiveness and accountability.



LGBTQ Working Group: The working group aims to ensure Division III is safe for, inclusive of, and welcoming to the LGBTQ community and its allies. To that end, the working group strives to increase engagement, education and understanding of LGBTQ issues at all levels of Division III by examining current resources and areas of unmet need, and creating programmatic, resource and recognition opportunities of the LGBTQ community and its allies.

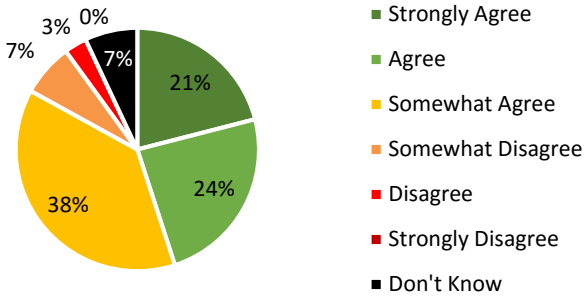


XI. DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND GENDER EQUITY

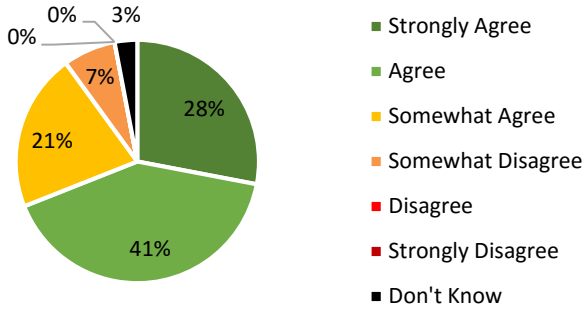
As a core value, the NCAA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators. The information requested below will assist Division III in determining the effectiveness of current programs as well provide guidance to help the Division III improve in this regard in the future.

Our conference has made intentional efforts to…

Increase the diversity of our conference office staff over the past three years.

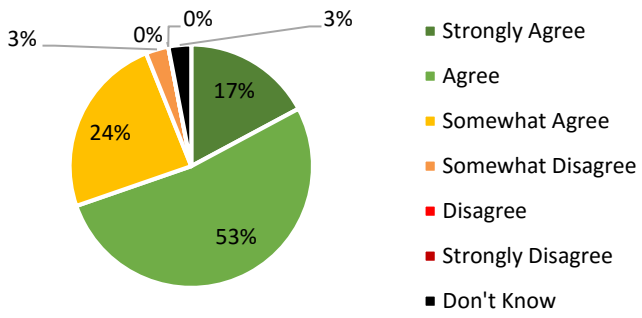


Promote inclusion and the value of diversity within athletics over the past three years.

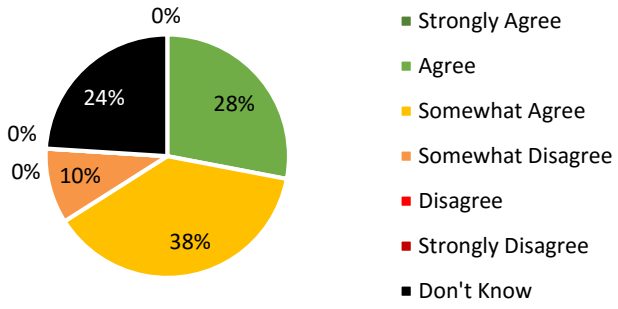


Diversity in Committee Appointments and Hiring

Increasing and diversifying the pool of candidates for Division III committee service is important for the division.

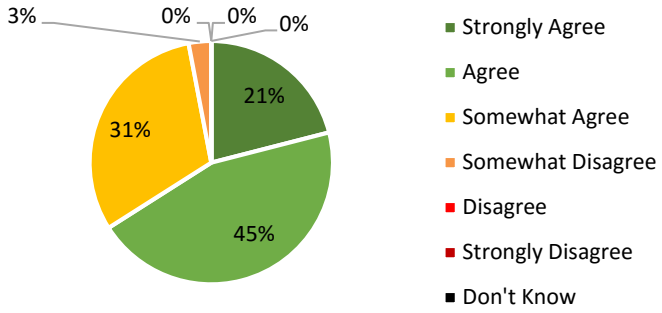


The NCAA's recent focus and efforts related to diversifying athletics candidate pools (e.g. Presidential Pledge) and Division III's The Diverse Workforce, a resource to aid recruitment and retention, have positively impacted our conference.



Partnerships

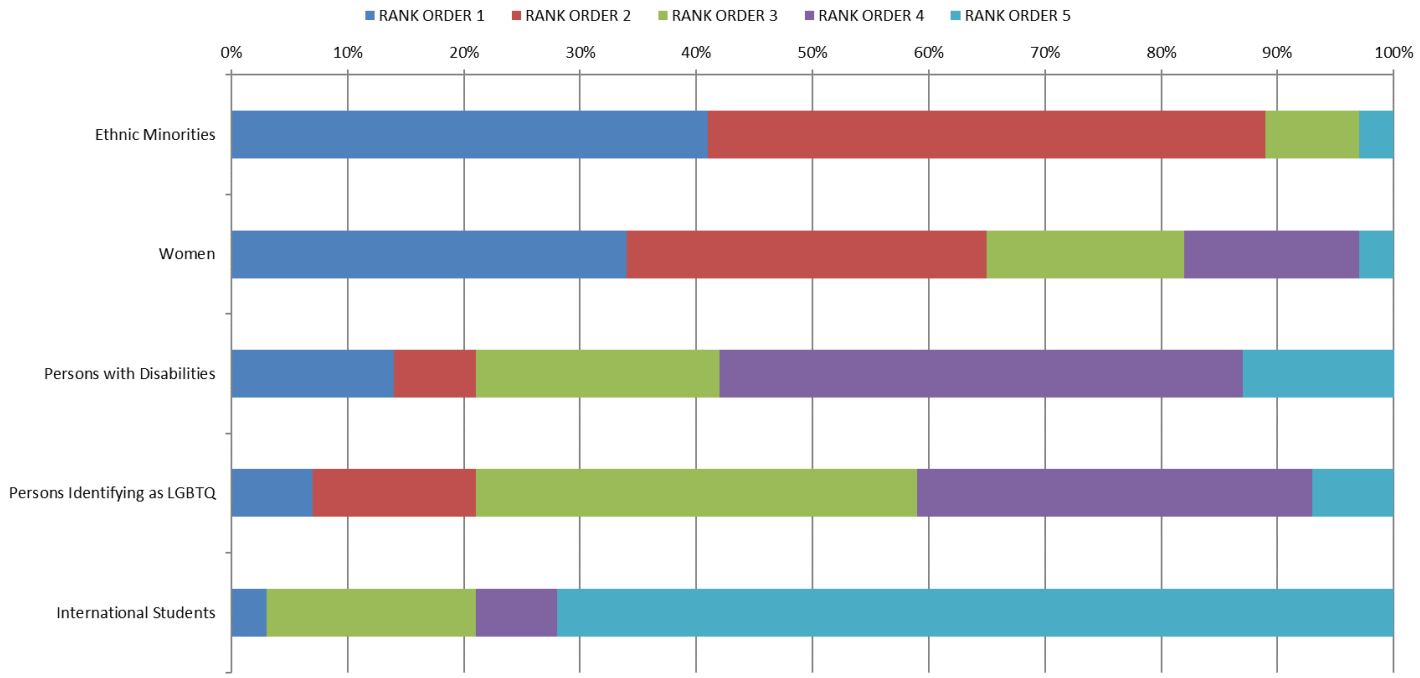
Division III should more actively partner with external organizations (e.g. Women Leaders in College Sports, National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators - NADIIIAA, Minority Opportunities Athletic Association - MOAA) to support innovative programs that promote inclusion.



While the NCAA inclusion statement encompasses many dimensions of diversity, five focus areas have been developed based on historical underrepresentation and discrimination within athletics. These areas are: persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, international students, persons identifying as LGBTQ and women.

Division III governance structure leadership is committed to partnering with Division III conferences and institutions to support innovative programs that promote inclusion.

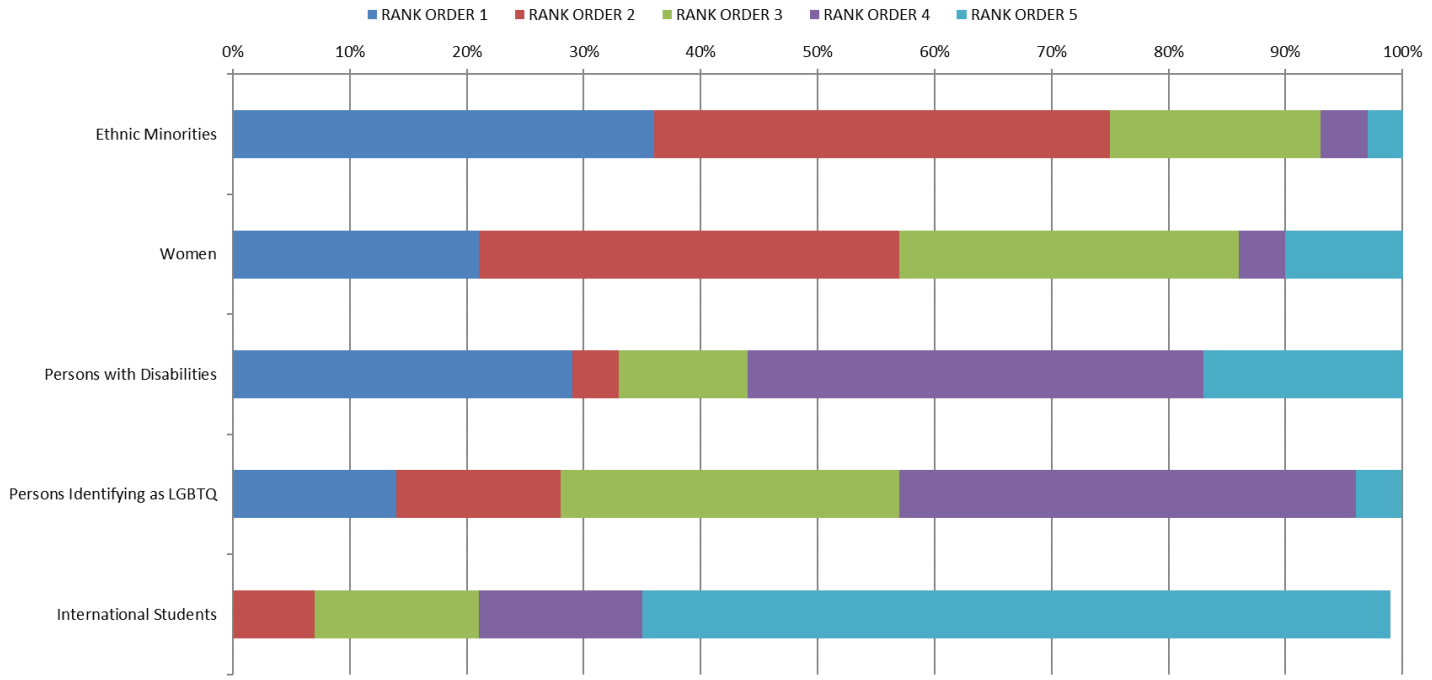
To help us prioritize our efforts, with your conference in mind, rank the following programming areas:



Division III governance structure leadership is committed to the expansion of NCAA programming and resources to enhance opportunities for the recruitment of persons with disabilities, persons identifying as LGBTQ, international students, women and ethnic minorities into coaching and athletics administrator positions.

To help us prioritize our expansion efforts, with your conference in mind, <u>in what areas should we expand programming and resources?</u>

Rank the following programming areas in order of importance to you.

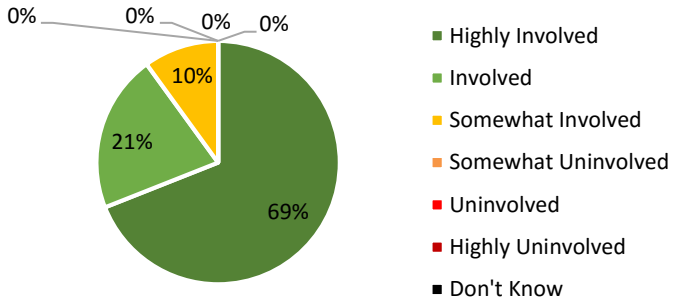


XII. CONFERENCE AFFILIATION

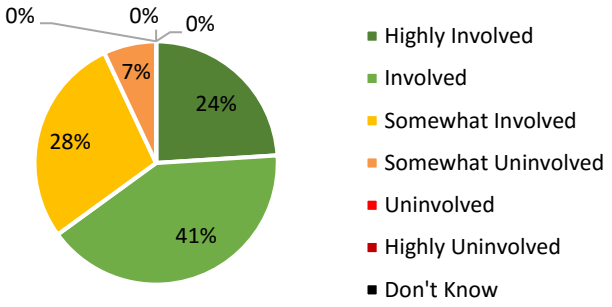
The vast majority of Division III institutions are members of a multi-sport NCAA conference. The information requested below will assist in further clarifying the role that NCAA member conferences play within the NCAA structure.

Indicate how involved your conference office in in the following:

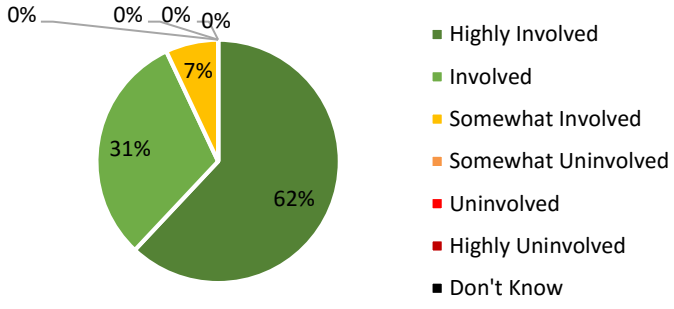
Monitoring Division III issues.



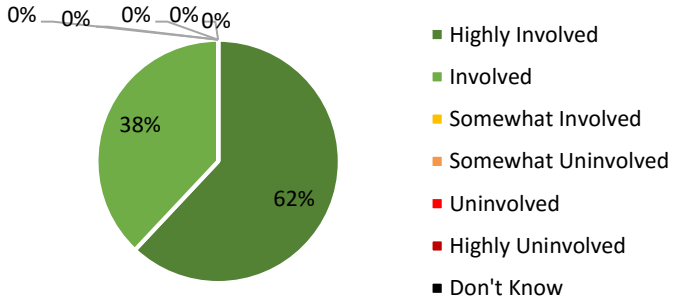
Requesting feedback from conference members regarding the work of governance bodies (e.g. committees, councils).



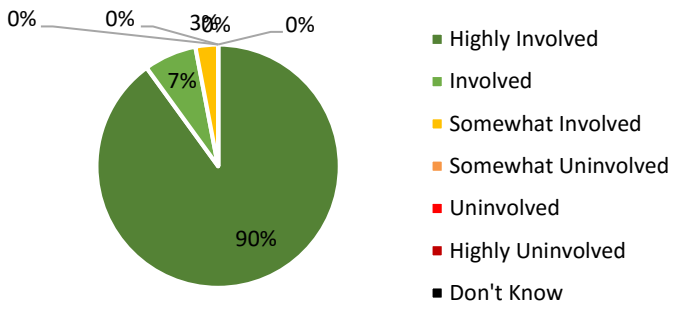
Providing timely governance information to conference members.



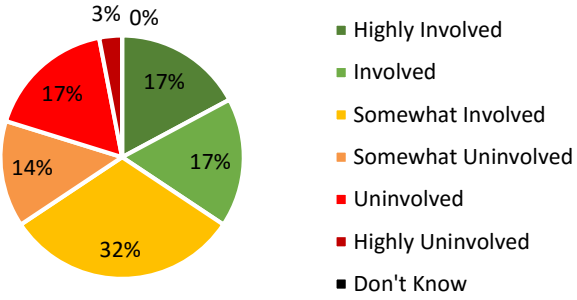
Educating conference members on legislative proposals in each legislative cycle.



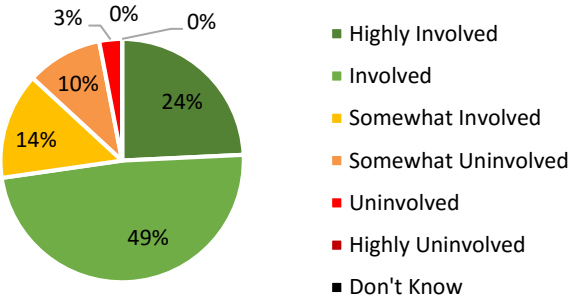
Managing the conference grant program.



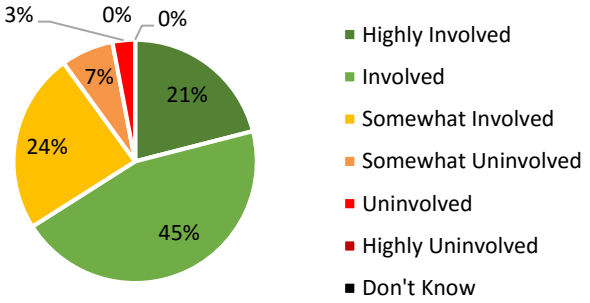
Promoting gender and ethnic diversity on member institution campuses.



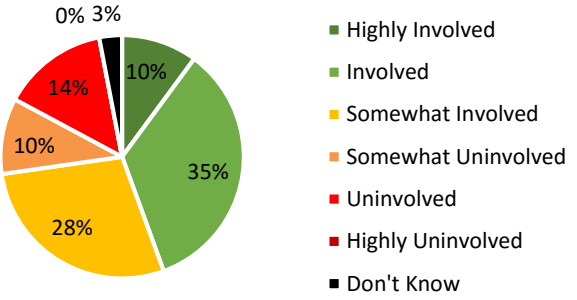
Promoting professional development opportunities for staff members on member institution campuses.



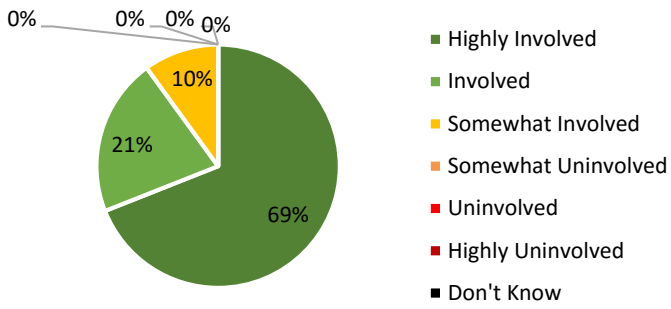
Promoting student-athlete welfare on member institution campuses.



Promoting integration on member institution campuses.

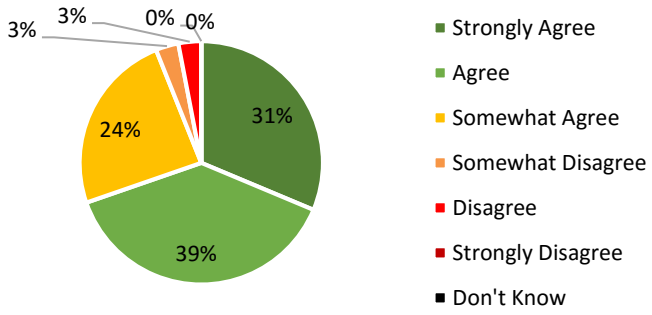


Encouraging member institutions to be involved in NCAA governance structure.

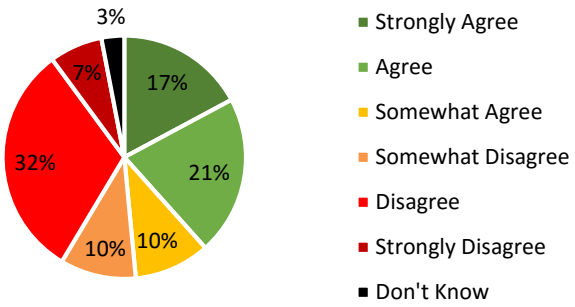


Multi-sport conference members should:

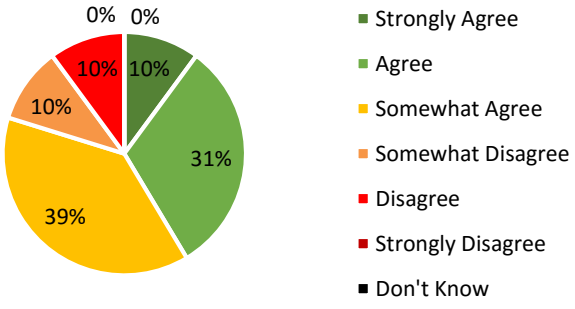
Share a similar institutional mission.



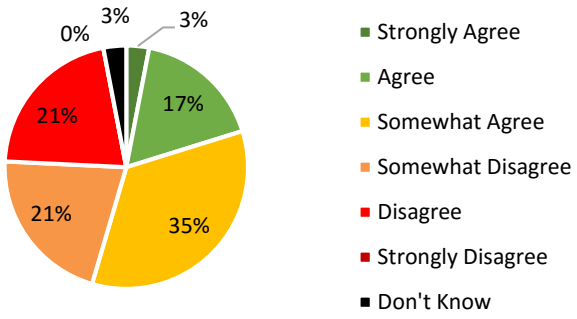
Be affiliated based on public and private designations.



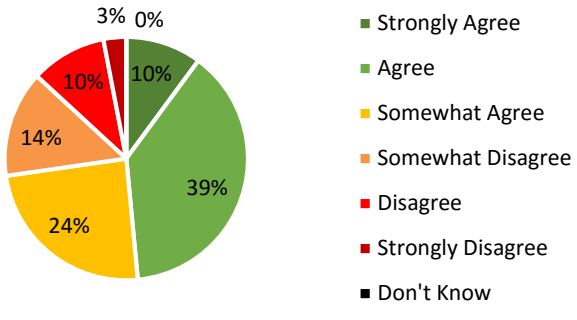
Share a similar academic profile (e.g. selectivity)



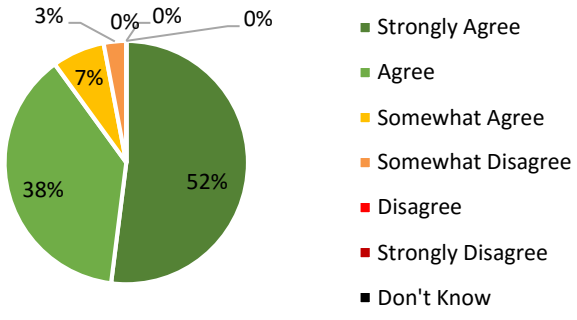
Share a similar cost of attendance.



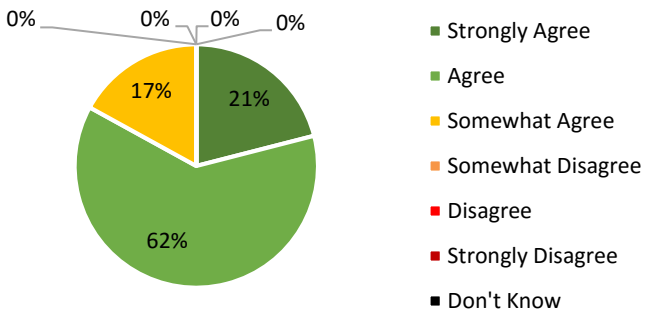
Be affiliated based on geographic proximity.



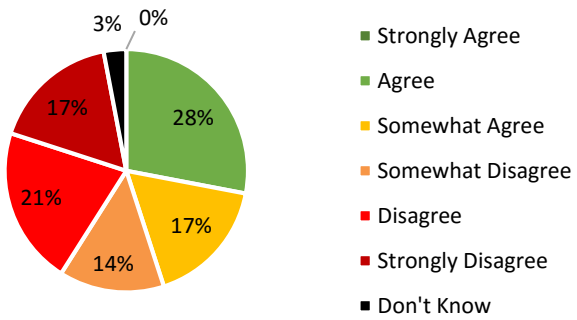
Shared athletics philosophy.



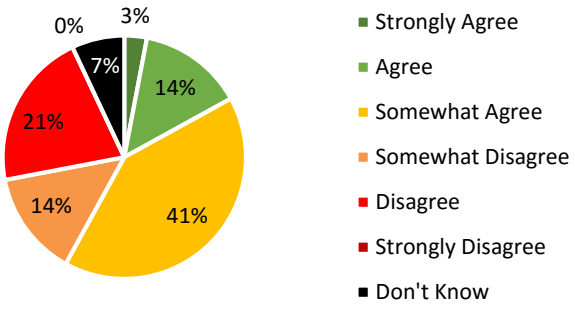
Share a similar athletics profile (e.g. sports sponsorship, resource allocation).



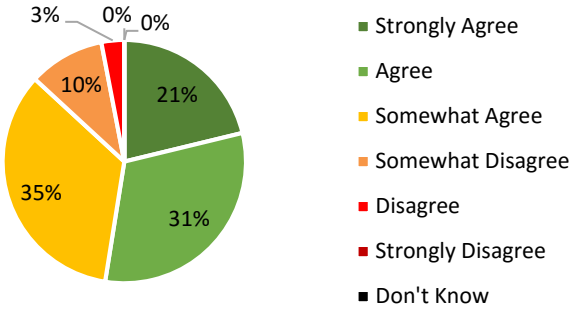
Be affiliated based on favorable championships access.



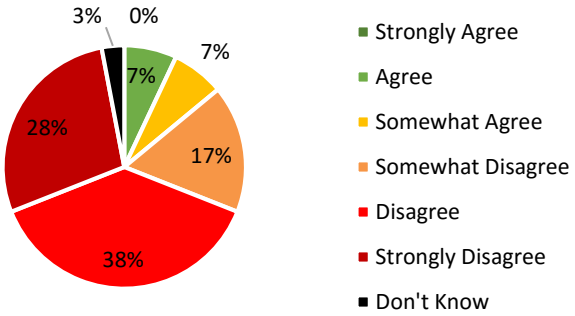
Be affiliated based on institutional history and tradition.



Share a similar perspective on legislative standards.



Be affiliated with any group of institutions, no common criteria.



Rank your top four (4) multi-sport conference grouping criteria.