July 13, 2012

Statement Regarding NCAA Ruling

NOTE: The Caltech Department of Athletics will be on probationary status with the NCAA from July 12, 2012 to July 11, 2015.

During a transition of leadership in the summer of 2011, Caltech discovered and submitted a self-report on NCAA student-athlete eligibility rules violations that occurred between 2007 and June 2011. A thorough audit affirmed that there had been no intentional wrongdoing, but some student-athletes were inadvertently allowed to play while ineligible.

The violations were largely due to the unique “class shopping” period that Caltech extends to its students as each term they determine and undertake their rigorous class load. Some students participated in athletics during the short time while not technically enrolled in the NCAA-required full time course load, while others who had participated while not meeting the academic good standing requirement. The cumulative effect of the individual violations was a finding of a lack of institutional control by Caltech over its intercollegiate athletic program, which is considered a major violation by the NCAA.

Caltech took action as soon as the first infractions were identified, and promptly corrected the conditions that had enabled the administrative oversights to occur. We have been in compliance with NCAA standards for the past year, and there were student-athletes who were reinstated for participation during the 2011-12 academic year.

After our self-report, we engaged in the summary judgment process with an NCAA committee on infractions. This collaborative process is how the NCAA and Caltech together arrived at the penalties that have been imposed.

As part of the penalty process, we will be vacating some wins and individual records. This is painful because each of those wins and records was earned through hard work and fair play by our student-athletes. While this is a disappointing time for our athletic department, we are very proud of our student-athletes and their achievements on and off the playing field, in and out of the classroom, and as citizens and leaders. We are committed to the continuing improvement our athletic program and to affirming the value of educational athletics in the lives of our undergraduates.

Betsy Mitchell
Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation