

PLANNING A CONFERENCE IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION SYMPOSIUM

Integration is a central tenet of the NCAA Division III Philosophy. Division III member schools and conferences, “seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete’s athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete’s educational experience ...”

The NCAA Division III Presidents Council has approved a NCAA Division III Strategic Positioning Platform to help the division’s internal and external constituents better understand and articulate the division’s unique philosophy and identity. The platform was released at the 2010 NCAA Convention, with implementation and activation efforts anticipated through 2010-12 and beyond.

Conference Integration Symposiums (CIS) would be primarily intended to bring conference key partners together in an effort to discuss ways in which each school (and the conference as a group) might best support the integration concept, consistent with the division’s unique philosophy, identity and strategic positioning platform.

Planning Team

The symposium planning team might best consist of the conference commissioner and at least two athletic administrators. The planning team is responsible for all symposium activities and logistics (see planning checklist below). In terms of individual campus communication, it may be prudent for the athletic director to take the lead.

Participants

Each school is encouraged to bring a “team” of participants to ideally include president, athletics “direct report”, athletic director, senior woman administrator (SWA) or associate/assistant athletic director, faculty athletic representative (FAR), male coach, female coach. Conference members are also encouraged to include student-athlete leadership.

Recommended Length of Program

Approximately one and a half days. A dinner to include some sort of keynote address/”institute charge” to be followed by a day-long (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) program.

Sample Schedule

Evening Program

5:00 p.m. Reception.

6:00 p.m. Welcome/dinner.

Keynote address (e.g., Division III Philosophy, Identity and Strategic Positioning Platform).

Full Day Program

7:15 a.m.	Continental breakfast.
8:00 a.m.	Session I (e.g., Understanding and Communicating the Division III Model—Internal and External). Speaker I (e.g., president, dean or athletics faculty representative). Speaker II (e.g., athletic administrator or coach). *Presentations limited to 25 minutes each.
9:00 a.m.	Breakout by institutional pairs. *Assign/train two facilitators per breakout in advance.
9:45 a.m.	Break.
10:00 a.m.	Session II (e.g., hiring and evaluation practices). Speaker I (e.g., president or dean). Speaker II (e.g., athletic administrator). *Presentations limited to 25 minutes each.
11:00 a.m.	Breakout by positions. *Assign/train one facilitator per breakout in advance.
Noon	Lunch. Research related presentation.
1:00 p.m.	Break.
1:30 p.m.	Session III (e.g., athletic department/faculty integration). Speaker I (e.g., faculty athletic representative). Speaker II (e.g., athletic administrator or coach).
2:30 p.m.	Breakout by Institutional Pairs. *Assign/train two facilitators per breakout in advance.
3:15 p.m.	Closing remarks (focus – ongoing follow-up).

Pre-Symposium Self-Study

All participating institutions are strongly encouraged to conduct a relatively informal institutional self-study as a way to prepare for the symposium. It may be particularly helpful to convene all campus partners who will be attending the symposium for a two-hour meeting where questions related to campus integration of academic, athletic, and student life dimensions are discussed. It is important that all participants are provided with self-study questions prior to the meeting, and that someone is designated as the meeting facilitator. Here is a sampling of the types of questions that participating schools may want to consider:

1. How does our institutional mission reflect and support the Division III philosophy, identity and strategic positioning platform?
2. How do we communicate, internally and externally, what our Division III membership means related to the academic, athletic, and co-curricular and extra-curricular expectations for the student-athlete experience?
3. In what ways does our athletic program complement the institution's mission? Do we have a departmental mission statement?
4. How do the following campus groups define athletic success: (a) administration; (b) faculty; (c) athletic administration; (d) coaching staff; (e) student-athletes; (f) trustees; (g) alumni/ae; (h) non-athlete students?
5. How important is the pursuit of conference and NCAA championships success to the above groups?
6. How do we communicate the ideals of competition/success and the role of athletics on campus?
7. How does athletics impact campus culture?
8. Do athletic departmental program and staff evaluation criteria match our athletics mission statement and how we define "athletic success"? The college's mission statement?
9. How do we define athletic "integration"? How do we encourage and maintain integration on campus?
10. What are the most significant challenges that stand in the way of the Division III ideal at our school and in our conference?
11. What strategies, programs, and initiatives, which further integration and the overall Division III philosophy and identity, might be shared with conference colleagues?
12. What do we hope to achieve from participating in the Integration Symposium?

Planning Checklist

- _____ Organize planning team.
- _____ Determine suggested goals and desired outcomes.
- _____ Meet with conference athletic directors.
- _____ Determine symposium dates/location.
- _____ Determine symposium facility/lodging/meals.
- _____ Identify symposium topics.
- _____ Identify/communicate with presenters/facilitators.
- _____ Distribute pre-symposium self-study.
- _____ Determine ongoing post-institute follow-up/desired outcome.

Questions and Answers

What would be the primary goals of an Identity and Integration Symposium?

The symposiums would provide an opportunity for campus partners (presidents, academic and athletic administrators, faculty, coaches, and student-athletes) to better understand and share ideas and objectives about the Division III intercollegiate athletics model that celebrates an appropriate balance and proportion between academics, athletics and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Some primary goals might be to:

1. Introduce or reacquaint participants with the Division III Philosophy Statement, Identity Initiative, Strategic Positioning Platform and key integration principles.
2. Examine how the Division III identity and related expectations are communicated to key internal and external constituents for each member school and the conference as a whole.
3. Engage participants in consideration of the related integration issues in various forms.
4. Develop and share integration and communication strategies (best practices).
5. Build or strengthen understanding within the conference regarding the Division III philosophy and identity.

What does the term “integration” mean in a college sports context?

The term integration might be best described as a focused and deliberate effort to encourage the academic, athletic, and student life dimensions of colleges and universities to work intentionally and collaboratively in attempting to align athletic programs with educational missions.

How might the Symposiums be different than similar “educational” programs sponsored by other organizations?

First and foremost, the Symposiums would be intended to promote the active involvement of all “educational partners” who are critical to the development and maintenance of athletic experiences that will celebrate educational goals. Secondly, symposium sponsors would be encouraged to develop a curriculum that is carefully designed so that presentations offered by presidents, faculty, and athletic administrators lead to focused breakout sessions/discussions. Carefully planned pre-symposium self-studies and post-symposium follow-up would help encourage the implementation of integration activities on individual participant campuses, and across conference membership. Finally, participants would be empowered to advocate the Division III athletics model to other internal and external constituents.

Have Division III athletic conferences or academic consortia sponsored similar types of programming aimed at promoting and developing an integration agenda?

Several conferences/consortia have participated in programming focused specifically on integration, which predated the development of the Division III Strategic Positioning Platform. These conferences include:

Associated Colleges of the Midwest
Landmark Conference
New England Small College Athletic Conference
Old Dominion Athletic Conference
Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference

How will the Symposiums be funded?

Funding will be provided through Tier II (“Social Responsibility and Integration”) of the Division III Strategic Initiative Grant Program. Symposiums have been added as a separate, fourth programming expectation in the four-year cycle for Tier Two, which previously included three other targeted priorities: diversity, sportsmanship, and student-athlete well-being/community service.

How can we get speakers and facilitators to participate in Identity and Integration Symposia?

The NCAA will help develop a list of potential speakers who have been intimately involved in discussions and deliberations surrounding the Division III philosophy, identity and various integration concepts.

Would all symposia have to follow the same format?

Absolutely not. Conferences will be encouraged to develop programs and activities that best meet their unique strengths/challenges and desired identity and integration outcomes.