REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISON I ACADEMIC CABINET
SEPTEMBER 8-9, 2008, MEETING

***ACTION ITEMS*.**

1. Legislative Item - Request for Action by the NCAA Division I Legislative Council.

- **Eligibility – Early Academic Certification – Submission of Transcripts.**

(1) Recommendation. The NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet recommends the NCAA Division I Legislative Council adopt noncontroversial legislation to specify that institutions are required to submit a final high school transcript(s) (official or unofficial) for student-athletes who were certified as early academic qualifiers; further, to specify that the transcripts must be submitted by November 15 following the individual's initial full-time collegiate enrollment. Finally, to specify that failure to satisfy this requirement will be an institutional violation per NCAA Constitution 2.8.1, but will not affect the eligibility of the student-athlete.

(2) Effective Date. August 1, 2009.

(3) Rationale. Current legislation permits an individual to be certified as a qualifier based on core courses, grades and test score through six semesters of high school. In these circumstances, the individual is not required to submit a final high school transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center. For the 2008-09 academic year, the Eligibility Center did not receive final transcripts from approximately 40 percent of the individuals who were certified as early academic qualifiers. These missing transcripts represent a significant gap in academic data available to the NCAA research staff, which is vital for future policy decisions in Divisions I and II. Without such data, the ongoing review of initial-eligibility and progress-toward-degree rules (e.g., the impact of the increase from 14 to 16 core courses) is threatened. The cabinet views this proposal as noncontroversial because discussions during the NCAA Divisions I and II Management Councils, NCAA Division I Board of Directors and NCAA Division II Presidents Council prior to the adoption of the early academic qualifier guidelines included the expectation that a process would be developed to ensure the collection of final transcripts. The proposed requirement fulfills that expectation. Whereas the submission of transcripts is not necessary for certification of initial eligibility, transcripts could be official or unofficial and will be accepted in any form (e.g., copy, fax), and failure to submit the transcripts will not affect the eligibility of student-athletes. Finally, the cabinet directed the staff to ensure that the

Eligibility Center Web site is updated to provide clear information to institutions regarding which final transcripts are required to be submitted.

(4) Estimated Budget Impact. None to minimal, as institutions generally receive a final high school transcript for admissions purposes.

(5) Student-Athlete Impact. None.

2. Nonlegislative Items.

- **None.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Legislative – Comments on Proposals to be Initially Considered by the Legislative Council in January 2009.

a. NCAA Proposal No. 2008-21 – Recruiting – Admissions and Graduation Data, Banned Drug List and Initial-Eligibility Standards – Reports and Notification – Eligibility Center. The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2008-21, which would specify that the Eligibility Center shall provide the information contained within the disclosure reports related to admissions, graduation-rate data, NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) data, Graduation Success Rate (GSR) data, initial-eligibility standards, the NCAA banned drug list and information about nutritional supplements to a prospective student-athlete and his or her parents or legal guardians after he or she has registered with the Eligibility Center or after the Eligibility Center has received an institution's request to add the prospective student-athlete to the institution's Institutional Request List (IRL), whichever occurs first. The cabinet recommends the sponsor modify the proposal to specify that the Eligibility Center shall provide notification of initial-eligibility standards, the banned drug list and information about nutritional supplements to a prospective student-athlete after he or she has registered with the Eligibility Center, and that the Eligibility Center shall provide information related to admissions, Federal Graduation Rate data, APR and GSR data to a prospective student-athlete after he or she has registered with the Eligibility Center and has been placed on an institution's IRL. The cabinet would support the proposal if modified. Further, in the event the sponsor does not accept the cabinet's recommended modification, the cabinet will sponsor an alternative proposal. The cabinet supports the concept of reducing the administrative burden on institutions and providing consistent information to prospective student-athletes by switching responsibility for the distribution of such information to the Eligibility Center.

However, the cabinet noted several difficulties associated with providing information to prospective student-athletes who have not yet registered with the Eligibility Center (i.e., who are only placed on an IRL), as well as with providing institution-specific information when a prospective student-athlete has not been placed on any IRL.

b. **Proposal No. 2008-36 – Eligibility – Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements – Eligibility for Competition – International Competition Waiver – Use of Credits Earned.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2008-36, which would specify that credits earned by a student-athlete during the term or terms to which an international competition waiver applies may be used to satisfy the 24/36-hour, percentage-of-degree and grade-point average progress-toward-degree requirements. The cabinet agrees with the sponsor's rationale for the proposal.

c. **Proposal No. 2008-37 – Eligibility – Transfer Regulations – Exceptions for Transfers from Four-Year Colleges – Church Mission.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2008-37, which would eliminate the church mission exception to the transfer residence requirement for transfers from four-year colleges. The cabinet noted that participation in a church mission is within the student-athlete's control and such student-athletes should not be provided an exception to the transfer legislation if they decide to transfer to a different four-year institution on return from the church mission.

d. **Proposal No. 2008-39 – Eligibility – Outside Competition – Effects on Eligibility – Exception – Conference All-Star Competition Against U.S. National Team – Women's Ice Hockey.** The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2008-39, which would specify, in women's ice hockey, that a student-athlete may compete during the academic year as a member of a conference all-star team in up to two contests against the U.S. Women's National Ice Hockey Team in the 12 months prior to the Winter Olympic Games. The cabinet recommends that the sponsor modify the proposal to specify that the student-athlete must be academically eligible for intercollegiate competition at time of the competition. The cabinet would support the proposal if modified. In the event the sponsor does not support the suggested modification, the cabinet will sponsor an alternative proposal. The cabinet noted the limited viable competition available for the U.S. national team, that women's ice hockey teams generally have good APRs and the limited timeframe during which the competition could occur. However, the cabinet supports the consideration of potential academic impact for all such outside competition requests.

e. **Proposal No. 2008-47 – Playing and Practice Seasons – Baseball – Maximum Number of Contests – 52 During the Championship Segment and Four During the Nonchampionship Segment.** The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2008-47, which would specify, in baseball, that an institution shall limit its total playing schedule with outside competition during the institution's playing season to 52 contests (games and scrimmages) during the championship segment and four contests (games and scrimmages) during the nonchampionship segment. The cabinet noted the continued need for academic improvement in this sport and, as a result, is opposed to making baseball a "two-semester sport." Further, the cabinet noted the challenges created when the baseball season recently was compressed and sees Proposal No. 2008-48 as the best solution to those challenges.

f. **Proposal No. 2008-48 – Playing and Practice Seasons – Baseball – Maximum Number of Contests – 52 During the Championship Segment.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2008-48, which would reduce, in baseball, the maximum number of contests from 56 to 52. The cabinet noted the proposal would likely result in less missed class time and time away from campus for baseball student-athletes, which should contribute to improved academic performance overall.

g. **Proposal No. 2008-60 – Division Membership – Provisional Membership Process and Requesting Reclassification – Institutions Subject to Academic Performance Program Penalties.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2008-60, which would specify that the NCAA Division I Administration Cabinet may deny an institution's advancement to active Division I membership for any Division II institution seeking reclassification to Division I or any provisional member seeking active Division I status, if any of the institution's sport programs are subject to penalties pursuant to the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP). The cabinet believes that academic considerations should be part of the membership process and that potential Division I members should be prepared to meet the same academic standards as existing Division I members.

2. **Legislative – Modification of Cabinet-Sponsored Proposals in the 2008-09 Legislative Cycle.**

a. **Proposal No. 2008-32 – Eligibility – General Eligibility Requirements – Full-Time Enrollment – Requirement for Competition – Nontraditional Courses.** The cabinet modified Proposal No. 2008-32, which would specify that enrollment in a nontraditional course (e.g., distance-learning, correspondence, extension, Internet courses, independent study or any other course or credit that is not earned in a typical face-to-face classroom environment with regular contact hours between the instructor and the student) offered by the certifying institution may be

used to satisfy the full-time enrollment requirement for competition, provided the specified conditions are met. The cabinet modified the proposal to also specify that the certifying institution must consider enrollment in such nontraditional courses as regular course enrollment for all students, and that the courses must be available to any qualified students at the certifying institution. The cabinet noted these revisions provide greater specificity and clarity regarding the criteria for nontraditional coursework.

b. Proposal No. 2008-35 – Eligibility – Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements – Regulations for Administration of Progress Toward Degree – Nontraditional Courses. The cabinet modified Proposal No. 2008-35, which would specify that nontraditional courses (e.g., distance-learning, correspondence, extension, Internet courses, independent study or any other course or credit that is not earned in a typical face-to-face classroom environment with regular contact hours between the instructor and the student) completed at a four-year institution other than the certifying institution may be used to meet credit hour and percentage-of-degree requirements, provided the specified conditions are met. The cabinet modified the proposal to also specify that the institution considers enrollment in such nontraditional courses as regular course enrollment for all students, and that the courses must be available to any qualified students at the certifying institution. The cabinet noted these revisions provide greater specificity and clarity regarding the criteria for nontraditional coursework.

3. Nonlegislative.

a. Use of a Core Course Completed After Receiving Athletically Related Financial Aid to Attend an Institution's Summer Term for Purposes of Meeting Initial-Eligibility Requirements. Responding to a request from the NCAA Division I Legislative Review and Interpretations Committee (LRIC) regarding the application of Bylaw 14.3.1.3.1.1 (exception - one core course after high school graduation), the cabinet recommended LRIC issue an interpretation to clarify that a prospective student-athlete who received athletically related financial aid to attend an institution's summer term is not permitted to use an additional core course earned after the institution's summer term to meet initial-eligibility requirements. Cabinet members noted this interpretation would be consistent with the original intent of this legislation, as sponsored by the NCAA Division I Academics/Eligibility/Compliance Cabinet. Although such individuals have not yet enrolled full time in a collegiate institution, the cabinet noted that they are considered student-athletes for purposes of some NCAA legislation and should satisfy initial-eligibility requirements before receiving aid and attending the institution's summer term. Further, the cabinet noted that scenarios in which

prospective student-athletes learn that they have not satisfied the initial-eligibility requirements to become "qualifiers" until after enrollment in summer terms should be reviewed through the initial-eligibility waiver process.

b. Revision of Initial-Eligibility Waiver Policies and Procedures. The cabinet approved revisions to the initial-eligibility waiver policies and procedures, effective for student-athletes entering a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2009, as follows:

(1) An institution filing a disability initial-eligibility waiver will be required to provide a statement from its disability services office or the campus equivalent that indicates whether the college or university, per its general student policies, considers the student-athlete disabled and outlines the accommodations the institution will provide to this student-athlete. If not, the institution shall indicate why the student-athlete does not qualify for accommodations.

(2) An institution filing a disability initial-eligibility waiver must provide any test results and clinical summary the institution used to determine if the student-athlete qualifies for accommodations. In instances in which the student-athlete has not yet been tested by the institution in order to determine appropriate accommodations, the waiver process shall grant, if appropriate, athletics aid only. After the student-athlete has been evaluated and appropriate accommodations have been determined, that information shall be provided to the NCAA and the student-athlete's waiver reconsidered to determine if full qualifier status is appropriate. In such instances, this second review shall not result in athletics aid being removed if previously granted.

Critically important to the underlying philosophical basis for accommodating students with education-impacting disabilities is the accountability of member institutions to meet the needs of such students beyond assistance with athletics eligibility. Currently, some institutions file waivers for student-athletes with disabilities as a means to achieve qualifier status and make no effort to provide the student-athletes with accommodations once admitted and enrolled at the institution. In some instances, the student-athlete does not meet the institution's requirements to receive disability accommodations. Requiring the abovementioned additional information for situations in which a disability initial-eligibility waiver is requested increases institutional accountability for student-athletes with education-impacting disabilities, and helps ensure that student-athletes with education-impacting disabilities are provided the appropriate accommodations to help them succeed academically.

c. Approval of High School Review Policies and Procedures. The cabinet approved revisions to the High School Review Committee Policies and Procedures as recommended by the High School Review Committee to help ensure efficiency and consistency in the processing of high school review cases. The cabinet noted these policies also must be approved by the NCAA Division II Academic Requirements Committee and will be distributed once that action has been taken.

d. Cabinet Policies and Procedures. The cabinet approved formal policies and procedures to provide direction and clarity regarding cabinet authority, individual member responsibilities, operational procedures, governance reporting structures and related guidelines.

e. Final Report of the Division I Academics/Eligibility/Compliance Cabinet Transfer Issues Ad Hoc Group. The cabinet reviewed the final report of the Transfer Issues Ad Hoc Group and noted the concepts forwarded by the ad hoc group for discussion and possible action. The cabinet determined that additional research on two-year college transfer student-athletes is needed and recommended that the NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance begin collecting data related to the academic performance of two-year college transfers through the APP data collection process. The data should include performance while at the two-year institution and subsequent to transferring to the four-year institution.

f. Update on the NCAA Division I Working Group to Review At-Risk Student-Athlete Issues. The cabinet received a progress report from the At-Risk Student-Athlete Working Group. The group was established to examine and respond to recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics. The cabinet noted that the working group has identified a number of factors that contribute to a student-athlete's risk of not graduating from a four-year institution and it is developing tools that can be implemented at the institutional level to identify and support student-athletes of various risk levels and to determine whether institutional resources are adequately supporting student-athlete graduation success.

g. Report from the Eligibility Center. The cabinet received an update from the Eligibility Center, including an overview of certification activity for the 2008-09 academic year and a discussion of trends in initial-eligibility certification. The Eligibility Center is completing its first season of academic certifications, and will continue with waivers and prospective student-athlete reviews through the fall. The cabinet also received feedback related to Proposal No. 2008-21 from the Eligibility Center representative.

h. **NCAA President's Report.** The cabinet received a report from the NCAA President regarding the new Division I governance structure, including a challenge to the cabinet to provide expertise and leadership on academic issues. The NCAA President discussed the controlling goals that will direct national office strategies for the next three to five years. The first controlling goal is to "complete this cycle of academic reform" and it was noted the cabinet will play a crucial role in attaining this goal.

i. **Updates from Committees Reporting to the Cabinet.** The cabinet received reports from the following committees that report to the cabinet:

(1) Foreign Student Records Committee;

(2) High School Review Committee;

(3) Initial-Eligibility Waiver Committee; and

(4) Student Records Review Committee.

The cabinet also named David Dosser, East Carolina University, as its representative to the High School Review Committee; Annette O'Connor, LaSalle University, as its representative to the Student Records Review Committee; and Loretta Lamar, U.S. Naval Academy, as a representative to the Core-Course Appeals Ad Hoc Group.

j. **Identification of Future Agenda Items and Determination of Priorities.** The cabinet identified the following priority topics to address in the next few years and noted that data collection will be necessary to fully examine each of these issues:

(1) Two-year college transfer student-athletes;

(2) Nontraditional courses;

(3) Impact of academic reform on academic support personnel;

(4) Time demands on student-athletes; and

(5) Impact of progress-toward-degree requirements on degree program selection.

k. Cabinet Communication Strategies. The cabinet identified several constituent groups for targeted communication efforts, including academic organizations (e.g., N4A, FARA), coaches groups and conferences not currently holding a seat on the cabinet. Members were assigned constituent groups for purposes of designing communication strategies best suited for their respective assignments and will report back in February for the purpose of developing a comprehensive communications plan. The plan will include components for delivering information from the cabinet ("outgoing" communication), collecting feedback and input from constituents ("incoming" communication), ensuring consistency in messaging and tailoring delivery methods for each group.

Cabinet Chair: *Carolyn Callahan, University of Virginia, Atlantic Coast Conference*
Cabinet Liaisons: *Matt Burgemeister, Membership Services*
Julie Cromer, Membership Services
Diane Dickman, Membership Services