REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISON I ACADEMIC CABINET
JUNE 28-29, 2010, MEETING

***KEY ITEMS*.**

1. **Review of Eligibility Standards for Prospective Student-Athletes.** The NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet met jointly with the NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance to continue its review of initial-eligibility and transfer-eligibility requirements in an effort to align all academic eligibility requirements to increase student-athlete graduation success. The cabinet considered modifications to the current initial- and transfer-eligibility requirements designed to identify those prospective student-athletes who are academically prepared for college work and to foster additional support for student-athletes who are academically underprepared. The cabinet will solicit feedback from the NCAA Division I Board of Directors and membership, and will continue to discuss enhanced eligibility models during its September meeting.

2. **Nontraditional Courses Used to Fulfill Full-Time Enrollment and Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements.** The cabinet sponsored two proposals to simplify the legislation regarding the use of nontraditional courses (i.e., 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) to meet full-time enrollment and progress-toward-degree requirements. The proposals are intended to provide student-athletes with access to courses available to the student-body in accordance with institutional policies and procedures, while protecting against the misuse of such courses solely to meet eligibility requirements.

***ACTION ITEMS*.**

- None.

***INFORMATIONAL ITEMS*.**

1. **Legislative – Cabinet Sponsored Proposals for the 2010-11 Legislative Cycle.**

   a. **NCAA Bylaw 14.1.8.2 – Eligibility – General Eligibility Requirements – Full-Time Enrollment – Requirement for Competition.** The cabinet sponsored legislation to specify that enrollment in a nontraditional course or credit (i.e., 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, including Internet/virtual courses, distance-learning, extension, correspondence, or independent study) offered by the certifying institution may be used to satisfy the

full-time enrollment requirement for competition, provided the following conditions are met:

(1) The course is available to any student at the certifying institution;

(2) The institution considers enrollment in the course as regular course enrollment for all students;

(3) Enrollment in the course occurs within the institution's regular enrollment periods (preregistration or drop-add period) in accordance with the institution's academic calendar and applicable policies and procedures; and

(4) The course is conducted during the institution's regular academic schedule (term time) in accordance with the institution's academic calendar and applicable policies and procedures.

In light of the prevalence and acceptance of nontraditional courses throughout post-secondary education, it is appropriate to modernize the guidelines regarding the various methods of course delivery. This proposal clarifies the opportunity for student-athletes to take legitimate nontraditional coursework, but also recognizes the potential for academic misconduct and provides safeguards against misuse to meet eligibility requirements. In general, student-athletes should be provided with similar access to nontraditional courses as all students at their respective institutions in order to fulfill the full-time enrollment requirements, provided the institution considers enrollment in such a course as regular course enrollment for all students. This proposal also includes baseline standards for nontraditional courses to minimize the potential for misuse. Finally, this proposal respects institutional discretion and authority in setting course content and curriculum, and relies on institutional integrity and security with regard to the delivery of nontraditional courses.

b. Bylaw 14.4.3.4 – Eligibility – Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements – Regulations for Administration of Progress Toward Degree – Nontraditional Courses. The cabinet sponsored legislation to specify that enrollment in a nontraditional course or credit (i.e., 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, including Internet/virtual courses, distance-learning, extension, correspondence, or independent study) completed at an institution other than the certifying institution may be used to meet credit-hour requirements and percentage-of-degree requirements, provided the following conditions are met:

(1) The course is available to any student at the certifying institution;

(2) The institution considers enrollment in the course as regular course enrollment for all students; and

(3) Enrollment in the course occurs within the institution's regular enrollment periods (preregistration or drop-add period) in accordance with the institution's academic calendar and applicable policies and procedures.

In light of the prevalence and acceptance of nontraditional courses throughout post-secondary education, it is appropriate to modernize the guidelines regarding the various methods of course delivery. This proposal clarifies the opportunity for student-athletes to take legitimate nontraditional coursework, but also recognizes the potential for academic misconduct and provides safeguards against misuse to meet eligibility requirements. In general, student-athletes should be provided with similar access to nontraditional courses from any institution, as is the case for all students at their respective institutions, in order to fulfill graduation requirements for all students. This proposal also includes baseline standards for nontraditional courses to minimize the potential for misuse. Finally, this proposal respects institutional discretion and authority in setting course content and curriculum, and relies on institutional integrity and security with regard to the delivery of nontraditional courses.

c. Designation of Certain Initial-Eligibility Bylaws as "Common Provisions." The cabinet sponsored a proposal to specify that the following bylaws shall be common provisions between Division I and Division II: Bylaws 14.3.1.2 (core-curriculum requirements), 14.3.1.2.2 (nontraditional courses), 14.3.1.2.3 (college courses), 14.3.1.2.4 (English as a second language courses), 14.3.1.2.5 (courses for students with education-impacting disabilities), 14.3.1.2.6 (grade value of core courses), 14.3.1.2.7 (pass-fail grade), 14.3.1.2.8 (repeat courses), 14.3.1.2.9 (multiple high school attendance), 14.3.1.3 (test-score requirement), 14.3.1.3.2 (combined test score), 14.3.1.3.3 (nonstandard test administration, and 14.3.1.3.4 (test-score report).

Federation of the Association has successfully provided Divisions I and II the opportunity to consider and amend initial-eligibility legislation deemed most appropriate for each division (e.g., core-course distribution, test-score and grade-point average requirements and core-course time limitation). However, there are portions of the initial-eligibility legislation that traditionally have and practically should remain consistent for the two divisions. Such bylaws include the definition of core courses, regulations for the use of specific types of courses to meet initial-eligibility requirements (e.g., college courses, Advanced Placement,

English as a Second Language), calculation of the core-course grade-point average, test-score specifications (except for minimum test-score requirement), and graduation requirements. Designating these bylaws as common provisions will provide consistency for prospective student-athletes and high school coaches and administrators to understand initial-eligibility legislation and how courses completed by the prospective student-athlete will be used for purposes of certifying eligibility. A consistent standard also will assist the academic certification staff at the NCAA Eligibility Center in more efficiently determining whether a particular student-athlete has fulfilled each division's initial-eligibility requirements. If the divisions were to have different legislation, the Eligibility Center staff would be required to apply different standards to the same course. This may result in two core-course lists for each high school, leading to duplicate work for Eligibility Center staff and confusion for prospective student-athletes. However, the autonomy of each division to establish its own initial-eligibility requirements (e.g., number of core courses, minimum grade-point average and standardized test score) will be maintained under this proposal. If this proposal is adopted, the common provisions will become effective when adopted by both the Division I and Division II membership. [Note: Bylaw 14.3.1.2.2 will not be designated as common unless Division II also adopts a proposal currently active in its legislative cycle.]

d. Academic Certification of Prospective Student-Athletes from Examination-Based Countries. The cabinet sponsored a proposal to create an exception to the core-course time limitation specifying that prospective student-athletes from an examination-based country are subject to the core curriculum time limitations as set forth in the NCAA Guide to International Academic Standards for Athletics Eligibility. As a general principle, the cabinet noted that prospective student-athletes from examination-based countries should be certified using grades from the leaving examination, rather than the prospective student-athlete's transcript, regardless of any delay in graduation or delay in taking the leaving exams. The cabinet noted that the NCAA International Student Records Committee also supports the certification of prospective student-athletes from examination-based countries using that country's leaving examinations, even if completion of those examinations are delayed beyond the core-course time limitation. This approach appropriately recognizes the nature of examination-based countries and is consistent with the educational system in the prospective student-athlete's home country. Further, a consistent approach for all prospective student-athletes from a particular country is the most fair and appropriate means of certifying academic eligibility. In addition, annual transcripts for students from examination-based countries can be difficult to obtain and often are unofficial documents which cannot be used for initial-eligibility certification purposes. Using official leaving examinations will significantly ease the administrative burden on prospective

student-athletes, member institutions and the Eligibility Center staff. Further, individuals who do not take their leaving exams during the normal timeframe for students in their educational system will not be permitted to complete one additional core course after graduation (to improve their core-course grade-point averages) since they will not graduate on time. Finally, a prospective student-athlete who delays completion of the leaving examination (and also engages in organized competition prior to initial full-time collegiate enrollment) may be charged with season(s) of competition under NCAA eligibility legislation, as the individual's anticipated date of graduation will not be changed for purposes of certifying competition prior to initial full-time collegiate enrollment.

2. Nonlegislative.

a. Review of Academic Preparation and Eligibility Standards for Prospective Student-Athletes. The cabinet continued its review of initial-eligibility and transfer-eligibility requirements in an effort to align all eligibility requirements to support student-athlete academic success. The cabinet met jointly with the Committee on Academic Performance and representatives of the two-year college community to discuss potential enhancements to the current initial- and transfer-eligibility requirements designed to identify those prospective student-athletes who are academically prepared for college work, and to foster additional support for student-athletes who are academically underprepared.

NCAA research continues to indicate that a combination of standardized test scores and high school grades is a better predictor of academic success at a four-year institution than using either grades or tests alone. Data also indicates that the high school core-course grade-point average is the single most significant indicator of success at the four-year institution. Given these findings and based on feedback from the Board, the group continued to review models for initial eligibility.

The cabinet will continue to consider whether enhancements to the initial-eligibility requirements could improve student-athlete graduation success without excluding prospective student-athletes who are capable of academic success; however, the cabinet noted that it may continue to monitor academic performance until the impact of increased eligibility standards and the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) can be more fully realized before considering a significant change to the initial-eligibility model.

Regarding two-year college transfers, the group reviewed data on student-athlete academic performance while at the two-year college(s), collected for the first time

in the most recent NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP) data collection process. The cabinet and committee considered several potential modifications to the current two-year college transfer regulations with the potential to generate greater academic success for two-year college transfers after transfer to a four-year institution.

Based on data indicating that an individual's most recent academic work is more predictive of future academic success than his or her high school academic profile, the group discussed whether all two-year college transfers should meet the same eligibility standard, regardless of qualifier status. Current rules establish different eligibility standards for two-year college transfers depending on the individual's qualifier status.

In addition, the group expressed interest in a concept that would target prospective student-athletes who are significantly academically underprepared by permitting an academic year in residence during the student's first year at the at the two-year college in order to remediate academic deficiencies. Student-athletes who present a specified academic profile would have the opportunity to choose such a plan at the time of the student's initial-collegiate enrollment, but would not be eligible for competition in the first year if they did so. Possible adjustments to the five-year clock and percentage of degree timeframe would allow such student-athletes to continue to participate in four seasons of competition within the five years immediately following the academic year in residence. Deviation from this plan would subject a student to standard NCAA eligibility regulations. Additional details, including the specific academic profile to qualify for such a graduation plan are yet to be determined.

The group also discussed whether an increase of the grade-point average requirement for two-year college transfers is appropriate. Research indicates that the overall grade-point average at the two-year college appears to be the best predictor of academic success at the four-year institution. Current regulations require a minimum 2.000 grade-point average in transferable degree credits to be immediately eligible for competition. The group expressed interest in increasing the minimum grade-point average in transferable credits, as well as adding an overall grade-point average requirement. The group noted a goal to minimize the number of student-athletes who do not meet the transfer requirement but eventually would be successful without increasing the number of student-athletes who meet the transfer requirements but eventually fail academically.

Research also suggests that the number of physical education credits completed at the two-year college is negatively correlated with academic success at the four-year institution. The group supported a concept to limit the number of physical

education courses that could be used to meet two-year college transfer requirements (transferable credits and grade-point average), unless the student-athlete declares a physical education major.

The group also discussed the concept of a transferable core curriculum for two-year college transfers, including a potential model requiring six semester hours of English (including three of writing or composition), three hours of mathematics and three hours of science of all two-year college transfers. The group also was interested in reviewing the impact of attendance at multiple two-year colleges. NCAA research indicates that between 25 and 40 percent of two-year college transfers in baseball, men's and women's basketball and football (depending on sport) attended more than one two-year college.

The cabinet will solicit feedback from the Board, membership and two-year college community and will continue to discuss enhanced eligibility models during its September meeting.

b. **Data Collection Regarding Two-Year College Transfer Student-Athletes.** The cabinet recommended to the Committee on Academic Performance that it continue to collect information on the academic performance of two-year college transfer student-athletes in baseball, football and men's and women's basketball for an additional two-year period. Specifically, the cabinet noted that the data collection is intended to inform the membership regarding the academic performance of two-year college transfers while at the two-year college. During the first year of data collection, information was collected regarding 3,961 student-athletes from 336 institutions; however, that number is expected to decrease as only a single year of enrolling student-athletes will be collected in fall 2010. The cabinet noted that the data collection is critical to continue to inform decisions about potential revisions to the two-year college transfer eligibility models as well as to begin to evaluate the impact of any future modifications.

c. **Women's Basketball Academic and Athletics Development Model.** The cabinet reviewed the proposed academic and athletics development model for women's basketball, as developed by the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Issues Committee. The cabinet noted potential difficulties in implementation of the model for institutions that are reducing the number of courses offered during the summer (or are offered early in the summer, which would make it difficult for incoming freshmen prospective student-athletes to participate). The cabinet also noted it would prefer that student-athletes be required to successfully complete all of the credits in which they enroll, rather than 50 percent, as proposed by the committee. Lastly, the cabinet expressed some interest in identifying academically at-risk student-athletes for the required summer school element rather than requiring all incoming student-athletes to attend.

d. Review of Recruiting Models Proposed by the NCAA Division I Recruiting and Athletics Personnel Issues Cabinet. The cabinet reviewed the proposed recruiting models developed by the Recruiting and Athletics Personnel Issues Cabinet. The cabinet expressed support for the concept of proposing recruiting models rather than single-variable amendments, and particularly for the models that address early recruitment issues by requiring a minimum number of academic evaluations and that preclude a verbal or written offer of athletically related financial aid prior to the institution receiving a four-semester or six-semester high school transcript.

e. Academic Support Plan Required for Initial-Eligibility Waivers. The cabinet approved an amendment to the initial-eligibility waiver policies and procedures to require that an academic support plan be submitted with an initial-eligibility waiver request in some situations. Academic support plans will be required in the following circumstances:

(1) The prospective student-athlete's academic record does not satisfy the minimum threshold requirements for review of initial-eligibility waivers. However, the NCAA staff may exclude additional waivers from this requirement based on an individual's outstanding overall academic record (e.g., student-athletes with a 3.500 grade-point average or a 1000 SAT/85 ACT test score)

(2) The prospective student-athlete's core-course grade-point average is less than 2.000.

(3) The prospective student-athlete has a diagnosed education-impacting disability.

(4) On request of the staff, based on the prospective student-athlete's overall academic profile.

The academic support plan will require the institution to identify strategies to support the student-athlete during the initial year of enrollment.

f. Academic Certification of Prospective Student-Athletes Who Graduate From High School and Enroll In College Early. The cabinet received an update on initial-eligibility waivers submitted for prospective student-athletes who graduated from high school before their expected date of high school graduation and enrolled immediately at NCAA Division I institutions. Occasionally, prospective student-athletes complete nontraditional courses to meet graduation and core-course requirements and these courses are invalidated during the

prospective student-athlete review process. In situations where the prospective student-athlete demonstrates academic readiness for college based on his or her overall academic profile, the NCAA academic and membership affairs staff has provided a partial initial-eligibility waiver for the student-athlete to receive financial aid during the initial term of enrollment and a conditional waiver for the ability to practice and compete during the following term. The cabinet supported the staff approach to such waivers and also requested that the staff provide additional information regarding the number of student-athletes who graduate from high school and enroll in college early, regardless of whether an initial-eligibility waiver was filed. The staff will continue to provide reports on such waivers submitted in the future and will develop waiver guidelines for the cabinet's consideration at a future meeting.

g. **Review of Home School Standards and Application of Home-School Standards to Nontraditional Coursework.** The cabinet received an update on a staff review of the standards for certifying the initial eligibility of prospective student-athletes who were home-schooled. The cabinet noted the review was appropriate given the cabinet's recent review of nontraditional courses used for initial-eligibility purposes, as many home-school administrators now use curriculum from providers of nontraditional courses. Currently, home-schooled students are required to meet the same requirements as all other prospective student-athletes. As part of their initial-eligibility certification, home-schooled students are required to submit a home-school transcript and additional documentation to the Eligibility Center. The Eligibility Center and academic and membership affairs staff reviewing such cases look for the same anomalies in the academic record as in the prospective student-athlete review process. However, the cabinet noted that legislation and policy regarding the certification of prospective student-athletes who attended a home school currently is limited, and directed the staff to develop a draft of potential policies for the cabinet's review at its September meeting.

h. **Initial-Eligibility Test Score Validity and Notification.** The cabinet received an update on conversations between NCAA staff and the national testing agencies to identify ways in which improved and more timely information can be shared with member institutions and the Eligibility Center in instances in which a test score is being questioned or challenged by the testing agency. The cabinet supported the staff's work and recommended continuing discussions with the testing agencies before considering legislative changes that may increase the burden on prospective student-athletes and student-athletes. Updates will be provided at future meetings as the discussions continue.

i. **Facilitating Learning and Achieving Graduation (FLAG) Update.** The cabinet received an update regarding the development and implementation of the FLAG program. Specifically, the Graduation Risk Overview (GRO) module, which assists institutions to evaluate and quantify each student-athlete's risk of not graduating, was released to the membership in December 2009. The second module, an online database of support services associated with specific risk factors, is currently under development by the national office staff. The module is projected to be available to the membership during summer 2010.

j. **Academic Eligibility Waiver Policies and Procedures.** The cabinet approved updates to the Initial-Eligibility Waiver Committee Policies and Procedures and the Progress-Toward-Degree Waiver Committee Policies and Procedures for the 2010-11 academic year. The revisions are primarily to reflect updates to the committees' authority and an institution's opportunity to appeal the committees' decisions to a subcommittee of the Academic Cabinet as a result of the adoption of NCAA Proposal No. 2009-60.

k. **Academic Cabinet Policies and Procedures.** The cabinet approved amendments to its policies and procedures to reflect the elimination of the cabinet's waiver appeal subcommittees due to the adoption of Proposal No. 2009-60 and due to changes in the compositional requirements for all councils and cabinets in the Division I governance structure. The revised policies and procedures are effective immediately.

l. **NCAA Division I Football Academic Working Group Report.** In a joint meeting with the Committee on Academic Performance, the cabinet reviewed the Football Academic Working Group's final report with a focus on outstanding issues related to the recommendations contained within the working group's report. The two governance bodies support the concept of requiring all football student-athletes to complete nine hours and earn the APR eligibility point during the fall term in order to be eligible for all games of the subsequent season. Football student-athletes failing to meet this requirement would be ineligible for participation in the first four contests in the following season. The groups also supported the option of reducing this penalty from the first four contests to two contests if the student-athlete earns 27 credit hours by the end of the summer session. Data demonstrate that football student-athletes who earn nine credit hours during the fall earn more APR points during their academic careers and are more likely to graduate and less likely to become an "0/2" student-athlete. Further, requiring 27 credit hours will position the student-athlete for graduation within four and a half years. This, in conjunction with other progress-toward-degree requirements, will ensure that football student-athletes are progressing toward a degree. The groups agreed that first-year student-athletes should be

allowed to use credit hours earned at the certifying institution during the summer before initial full-time enrollment and credit hours earned during the summer after the regular academic year to satisfy the 27 credit-hour requirement, but not the nine credit-hour requirement.

To address institutions following quarter-based academic calendars, the cabinet and committee recommended that football student-athletes be required to earn eight quarter hours in the fall term and, for those that fail to satisfy this requirement, be required to earn 40 quarter hours prior to the subsequent fall term in order to reduce the contest penalty. Research indicated the eight quarter-hour requirement generally is equivalent to the nine semester-hour requirement. Further, the 27 semester credit-hour requirement was selected because it positions a student-athlete for graduation in four and a half years. Requiring a football student-athlete at an institution with a quarter-based academic calendar to earn 40 quarter credit hours will position that student-athlete to graduate in an approximately equivalent period of time.

The cabinet and committee did not favor the working group's recommendation to no longer exempt the aid of "0/2" student-athletes who have exhausted eligibility when calculating contemporaneous penalties for Football Bowl Subdivision teams. The cabinet and committee agreed to take no action at this time regarding the recommendation in light of the Committee on Academic Performance's continued review of the APP, including the existing penalty structure, penalty-waiver filters and exceptions and cut scores. The two groups agreed that more time must be devoted to the study of time demands on football student-athletes and supported the cabinet in its effort to develop enhanced academic requirements for two-year college transfers that more accurately reflect the academic preparation most likely to lead to completion of a four-year degree.

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