Ms. Judy Rose
Chair, NCAA Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
9201 University City Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28223

June 14, 2011

Dear Judy,

I noted that the June meeting of the NCAA Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet (Cabinet) contains the following agenda item:

> Letter from Big 12 Council of Faculty Athletics Representatives and track and field GOALS study. [Supplement Nos. 23a. and; 23b, to be posted online prior to June teleconference.] (Connie Dillon) [No action anticipated.]
>
> **Background:** *The cabinet is being provided information discussing the elimination of track regionals and a request to vote at the September cabinet meeting on whether to eliminate track regionals. Also, the cabinet is being provided track and field information from the GOALS study.*

In response to this item, the Division I Track & Field Coaches of the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) wish to express their **overwhelming support** for the continuation of the present NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships format, including the Preliminary Championship Competition and the Final Championship Competition. At the same time, we strongly believe that a focus on the further improvement of the current NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships should be pursued immediately.

In addition, we wish to express our concerns regarding many of the statements made by Ms. Connie Dillon in her letter to you, dated April 27, 2011 and included in the Cabinet's agenda as Supplement No. 23a. I have enclosed with this correspondence our response to these statements.

Although there was some initial opposition to the present Outdoor Championships format from NCAA Division I Track & Field Coaches when it was adopted by the Cabinet in September 2008, that initial opposition has turned to **overwhelming support** since the new format was introduced and experienced at the 2010 NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships. At the 2010 USTFCCCA Convention, for the first time since 2006, **no** proposals were introduced by NCAA Division I Track & Field Coaches to pursue a change in format for the Outdoor Track & Field Championships. To the contrary, discussion regarding the Outdoor Track & Field Championships focused on various ways to improve the conduct of the competition under the present format, including seeking enhanced NCAA funding for the championships as currently conducted. Further, NCAA Division I Track & Field Coaches strongly wish to establish consistency in the Championships format prior to any consideration of significant changes to that structure, as the present format has only been in place for two years.

We believe that the present format offers the greatest access and the greatest competitive equity of any championship format conducted in the 90-year history of the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships. We believe it is in line with the values, mission, and principles of the NCAA and of

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the Cabinet. We also believe that the NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships, as they are presently conducted, can be improved. To that end, we have submitted several requests for action to the NCAA Division I Track & Field Sport Subcommittee, including requests for procedural changes to the Championships that involve no additional costs and that would improve the conduct of the competition; for NCAA transportation and per diem costs for qualifiers to all rounds of the Championships (including the Preliminary Championship Competition); for additional funding for the hosts of the Preliminary Championship Competition; and for NCAA participant awards for student-athletes to be awarded to all Preliminary Championship Competition qualifiers.

We respectfully request that the members of the Cabinet **reject** the request of the Big 12 Conference to place the elimination of the Preliminary Championship Competition in NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field on its September 2011 agenda. We ask the Cabinet members to join us in moving forward on this issue, as we seek to develop consistency in our Championships format while also pursuing and instituting ways to improve the Championships as currently conducted.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

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Encl: Response to information contained in April 27, 2011 letter from Connie Dillon to Judy Rose

Cc: Members of the NCAA Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet
Connie Dillon, Chair, Big 12 Conference Council of Faculty Athletics Representatives
President Guy Bailey, Division I Board of Directors
Chancellor Brady Deaton, Chair, Big 12 Conference Board of Directors
Mike Alden, Chair, Division I Leadership Council
Joni Comstock, Senior Vice President for Championships, NCAA
Liz Suscha, Assistant Director of Championships, NCAA
Todd Patulski, Chair, NCAA Division I Track & Field Sport Subcommittee
Dan Beebe, Commissioner, Big 12 Conference
Dru Hancock, Senior Associate Commissioner, Big 12 Conference
Jo Potuto, President, 1A FAR
Dave Clough, President-Elect, FARA
Ron Mann, President-Elect, USTFCCCA Division I Track & Field Coaches

Response to Information Contained in April 27, 2011 Letter from Ms. Connie Dillon to Ms. Judy Rose

The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) wishes to address claims and information asserted in the April 27, 2011 letter of Ms. Connie Dillon to Ms. Judy Rose. Our response is presented here in the same order as the information contained within the April 27 letter.

NCAA Principle 2.2. "Intercollegiate athletics programs shall be conducted in a manner designed to enhance the physical and educational well-being of student athletes." NCAA Principle 2.15. "The conditions under which postseason competition occurs shall be controlled to... prevent unjustified intrusion on the time student-athletes devote to their academic programs..."

The April 27 letter argues that "the current structure requires scheduling our [Big 12 Conference's] 2012 Conference championship during the final examination window for most of our member universities [emphasis added]. We suspect that this will also be the case for numerous Division I colleges and universities around the country which are on the traditional semester system."

However, this assertion is factually untrue. In 2011, the qualifying period for the Outdoor Championships began on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 and ended on Sunday, May 15, 2011; for 2012, the qualifying period will run from Thursday, March 1, 2012 through Sunday, May 13, 2012. The present format of the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships does not include any requirement regarding the scheduling of conference championships; conferences may schedule their conference meets at any time, and student-athletes may continue to compete and achieve qualifying performances after the conference meet until the end of the qualifying period.

In fact, the 2011 NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field conference championship schedule shows the multitude of scheduling options selected by different conferences for their Outdoor Track & Field Championships:

Figure 1. 2011 NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Conference Championship Schedule Summary

Week/Weekend	Number of Conferences
April 16	1
April 23	3
April 30	1
May 7	11
May 14	15

While many conferences chose to hold their Outdoor Track & Field championships over the final weekend of the qualifying window in 2011, just over half of all conferences held their championships earlier in the season, likely to better accommodate the academic schedules and/or other concerns of their member institutions.

Under the present system, conferences are **not** placed in the position of having to choose between the physical and educational well-being of their student-athletes, as the April 27 letter asserts. Rather, conferences can elect to host their conference championships at any point within the qualifying window to better meet the academic schedules of their member institutions.

The April 27 letter further states that reducing the length of the competitive season in Outdoor Track & Field would be "a move in the right direction" since "track and field student-athletes have the longest competitive season of any NCAA sport, a season which extends across three semesters."

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In fact, the NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field regular season extends from the beginning of the qualifying period on March 1 through the second weekend in May, with the Championships spread over two additional competitions in a four-week post-season period. Although it is true that many student-athletes compete in Indoor Track & Field or Cross Country, in addition to Outdoor Track & Field, it is also true that many student-athletes compete in both Football and Outdoor Track & Field. Just as it would not make sense to shorten the Football season due to many student-athletes competing in Outdoor Track & Field in the spring, we do not believe it makes sense to shorten the Outdoor Track & Field season simply because many student-athletes also compete in Cross Country and/or Indoor Track & Field.

In addition, the post-season Championship segment of the NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field season is in line with or shorter than that of many other NCAA Division I sports. The first day of the Preliminary Championship Competition to the last day of the Final Championship Competition covers a period of 17 days. Using the same type of count in other sports, this compares with post-season Championship segments of 27 days for Baseball, 25 days each for Men's and Women's Soccer, 21 days for Softball, 18 days each for Men's and Women's Golf, 17 days for Women's Volleyball, and 17 days for Men's Lacrosse. Like NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field, each of these sports also conducts its post-season Championship segment during the end of a traditional Fall or Spring semester.

Further, the "Initial Findings from the NCAA GOALS Study on the Experiences of Current Division I Track & Field Student-Athletes" (Supplement No. 23b to the June 2011 NCAA Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet agenda) bear out that student-athletes in Track & Field largely do not share the concerns of the April 27 letter regarding the time demands of our sport. According to that report:

> "Division I track and field participants are much less likely than Division I SAs [student-athletes] in the comparison sports studied to state that they would prefer to spend less time on athletics. Similarly, track and field SAs who were not satisfied with the amount of time they spend with coaches were much more likely to want more time with the coaches rather than less." (Page 10)

Further, NCAA Division I Track & Field student-athletes are among the most engaged on their campuses in terms of fulfilling the dual roles of both student and athlete. The four-year average APR for a Men's Outdoor Track & Field team is 962, as compared to 959 for Men's Basketball, 945 for Baseball, 949 for FBS Football, and 943 for FCS Football. For Women's Outdoor Track & Field, the four-year average APR is even higher at 972, as compared to 968 for Women's Basketball.

As a result, we believe that the Preliminary Championship Competition **is not an unjustified intrusion** on the time student-athletes devote to their academic programs. Further, we believe that the letter's concerns about the timing of conference championships and the academic schedules of individual institutions are better addressed at the conference level in the scheduling of the conference championships, rather than through the elimination of the Preliminary Championship Competition.

Cabinet Principle 4. "Insure that long-term sustainability of the championship is reflected in sound fiscal management and the development of strategies that can diversify and enhance revenue streams."

We understand concerns related to the present format's fiscal burden on NCAA Division I institutions. To that effect, we have submitted proposals to the NCAA Division I Track & Field Sport Subcommittee that would alleviate this burden and strike a better balance between NCAA funding and institutional funding for our sport's post-season, similar to the balance struck in other sports. Like NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field, the post-season periods in Softball and Baseball likewise keep student-athletes on campus after many campuses' spring semesters or quarters have ended; to our knowledge, there is no major outcry to shorten the post-season of these sports. We believe that more study can and should be done in this area with regard to maintaining the benefits of the present competition format while providing a sound fiscal strategy for the future of the Championships.

At the same time, we disagree with the letter's statement that "only a few student-athletes advance to the championship from the preliminary-round who would not have otherwise done so and fewer are competitive." Based on data compiled from both this year's and last year's Championships, roughly 1/3 (32%) of the field at the Final Championship Competition in each year finished the regular season ranked outside of the top 24 in their event(s). Of these, 11% were not even ranked in the top 48 in the country in their event(s) heading into the Preliminary Championship Competition. This is a significant percentage of student-athletes who qualified to the Final Championship Competition solely because of the head-to-head competition provided by the Preliminary Championship Competition.

Figure 2. Final Championship Competition Qualifiers by Regular-Season Descending Order List Rank

	2010	2011	Percent Within Top XX	Percent Outside Top XX
Top 12	403	398	40%	60%
Top 24	686	690	68%	32%
Top 36	811	816	81%	19%
Top 48	893	894	89%	11%

In addition, 44 student-athletes in 2010 and 33 student-athletes in 2011 who were not ranked in the top 24 in their event at the end of the regular season scored team points by finishing in the top eight at that year's Championship. In total, they represented 12% of the total number of student-athletes who scored in the meet during its first two years.

Figure 3. Final Championship Competition Scorers by Regular-Season Descending Order List Rank

	2010	2011	Percent Within Top XX	Percent Outside Top XX
Top 12	228	230	69%	31%
Top 24	290	298	88%	12%
Top 36	312	312	94%	6%
Top 48	320	321	96%	4%

In addition to our position that such claims that few student-athletes who advance through head-to-head competition are competitive at the Final Championship Competition are factually untrue, we believe that the philosophy underlying these claims flies in the face of the Championship structure of most NCAA Division I sports. If the premise that "only a few" lower-ranked teams/individuals advance through a sport's preliminary Championship rounds is sufficient cause to drastically reduce access to the Outdoor Track & Field Championships, then that philosophy would mean that the Men's Basketball Tournament, Women's Basketball Tournament, College World Series, Women's College World Series, Men's College Cup, Women's College Cup, etc. likewise should be drastically reduced in size. We do not believe that such a statement represents the overall philosophy of the Cabinet, as evidenced by the Championship structures of these other sports.

Further, we wish to emphasize the second part of Cabinet Principle 4, which is "the development of strategies that can diversify and enhance revenue streams." This principle also ties into Cabinet Principle 5, that "a Division I Championship shall be conducted in collaboration with corporate, media and host partners in recognition of their potential to strengthen and support the championship." We believe that considerations of revenue-enhancing strategies and the integration of collaborative partners have not yet been undertaken for the NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships. Further, we believe that there are multiple opportunities for improvement in this area within our present Championships format and that our Championships need focused action on these opportunities.

As an example, this year, in just the second year of our current format, one of the institutional hosts of a Preliminary Championship Competition drew over 20,000 paid spectators to the event. In spite of the widespread opinion that these events are loss generators, this institution produced an excess of revenue over expenses in hosting the competition. The lessons learned from this success can and should be built upon to provide a stronger fiscal basis for our Preliminary Championship Competition moving forward.

While we acknowledge that there is a limited pool of institutions with facilities that can host the Preliminary Championship Competition, we believe that this is true for many NCAA Championship-level events and not unique to Outdoor Track & Field. For example, there are a limited pool of institutions that can host a Baseball or Softball Super Regional or a Men's or Women's Basketball Regional. However, we believe that the current lack of hosting bids for the Preliminary Championship Competition from among institutions with capable hosting facilities has resulted largely from the bidding procedure itself. For this year's Preliminary Championship Competition, the bidding information was distributed less than a year before the event; as of the date of this correspondence, bidding information has not been sent out for next year. Further, the potential benefits of hosting the Preliminary Championship Competition have not been clearly defined to NCAA Division I institutions; for example, hosting a Preliminary Championship Competition results in some 10,000 hotel nights in the area of the host city. We believe that the consequent lack of bids is primarily a result of these administrative problems, not a problem inherent to the sport of Outdoor Track & Field.

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NCAA Bylaw 18.01.1 Purpose of NCAA Championships. "NCAA championships are intended to provide national-level competition among the best eligible student-athletes and teams of member institutions..." Cabinet Principle 3. "Provide championship access reflective of the quality of nationwide competitive excellence and membership sponsorship of the sport..."

Again, we disagree with the factual and philosophical grounds of the statement that "the same athletes [advance] to the championship without regard to the preliminary-round," for the reasons stated above.

Further, we wish to emphasize the second part of Cabinet Principle 3, that championship access should be reflective of the membership sponsorship of the sport. Outdoor Track & Field is among the most widely sponsored NCAA Division I sports for both men and women, as evidenced in the most recent NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates report. For women, Outdoor Track & Field is the sixth most sponsored sport at the NCAA Division I level, with 310 institutions sponsoring the sport for the 2009-10 season. Further, it has the largest number of participants of any NCAA Division I women's sport at nearly 12,000 participants in 2009-10 (11,934). Outdoor Track & Field is the fifth most sponsored NCAA Division I sport on the men's side. Its 2009-10 total of 10,812 participants ranks second only to Football in terms of NCAA Division I men's participation.

NCAA Bylaw 2.15. "The conditions under which postseason competition occurs shall be controlled to assure that the benefits inherent in such competition flow fairly to all participants..."

USTFCCCA acknowledges that any format with a conference AQ would provide maximum conference access to the championship. However, we dispute the assertion that such plans provide greater access to student-athletes, as we have seen no plan (including the former four-site regional format and all alternative plans considered by the Cabinet) that includes greater Championship access to student-athletes than the present format. Further, any plan that would increase Championship access to student-athletes would also increase cost; these factors must be considered together, rather than as separate aspects of the Championships.

Cabinet Mission: Highest Quality Experience

We wish to address the statement in the April 27 letter that "In September 2010, when the Committee's recommendation was considered by the Cabinet, both the Committee and the members of the US Track and Field Coaches Association were unanimous in their support of alternatives plans [sic]." The alternative plans brought forward by the USTFCCCA and the NCAA Division I Track & Field Sport Subcommittee at the September 2010 meeting of the NCAA Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet **were only developed in direct response to a request for such proposals from the Cabinet** in September of 2009:

> After reviewing and discussing significant feedback from the membership and the NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field Committee, the cabinet agreed to maintain the current regional qualifying system and charged the Men's and Women's Track and Field Committee to review the current model and consider alternative models... (Report of the NCAA Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet, September 15-16, 2009, page 8)

Upon receiving this request, the NCAA Division I Track & Field Sport Subcommittee approached the USTFCCCA for input in reviewing the "current" Preliminary Championship Competition model (which had not yet been implemented at the time of the Cabinet's request) and considering alternative

models. The Sport Subcommittee set a deadline of February 2010 for feedback from the USTFCCCA, which again meant that the USTFCCCA had to provide feedback prior to the initial implementation of the Preliminary Championship Competition. Working under these deadlines, the USTFCCCA and the Sport Subcommittee worked diligently to develop an alternative model that addressed the specific concerns of the Cabinet, and we were united in our support for that alternative model versus other alternative models considered.

Since that time, and due to our Coaches' experience with the implementation and execution of the current format, support has solidified within the USTFCCCA NCAA Division I Track & Field membership for the Preliminary Championship Competition/Final Championship Competition structure, as evidenced by the fact that at the 2010 USTFCCCA Convention, and for the first time since 2006, NCAA Division I Track & Field Coaches made no proposals regarding a change in format for the Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

We believe that the timing of this request to eliminate the Preliminary Championship Competition hurts our sport's credibility. This request was addressed April 27, 2011, less than one year after the implementation of the present Championships format. Although we believe that each group has acted in good faith throughout this process, we believe that efforts to change the format of the Outdoor Track & Field Championships at this time are harmful to the sport. NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field has undergone two major format changes in the last ten years (in 2003 and 2010), and the new format is in just its second year of implementation. We believe that more time is necessary to evaluate and improve the present format before any consideration is given to significant changes in the structure of the Championships.

Finally, while we agree with the April 27 letter that access alone is not central to a quality experience, we believe that access and competitive equity are important aspects of a quality Championship experience for student-athletes, and we believe that the present Outdoor Track & Field Championship format provides both of these elements. Further, we strongly believe that the present format can have a true "Championships atmosphere" with the investment of time and funding to these ends. The NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships, the NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championships, the College World Series, the Women's College World Series, the Men's Lacrosse Championships, etc. are Championship atmospheres because they have been packaged and delivered as such. We believe that the present format is an event that can be better packaged and better delivered to create a true Championships atmosphere and experience for the competing student-athletes.

To this end, we have made several proposals to the NCAA Division I Track & Field Sport Subcommittee that we believe would improve the Championships atmosphere, and we are confident that the dedication of further time and qualified personnel to this subject would yield further improvements that would elevate the student-athlete experience at the Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

Although we understand and appreciate the present fiscal climate and the burden it has placed on many NCAA Division I institutions, we strongly disagree with the conclusion that this climate necessitates the elimination of the Preliminary Championship Competition in NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field. Rather, we feel that the present fiscal burden of the Championships should be better balanced between the NCAA and its member institutions (as it is in other sports with large Championship fields, such as Men's and Women's Soccer, Men's and Women's Basketball, Baseball, and Softball). We also believe that serious efforts should be made to develop strategies that can diversify and enhance revenue streams to ensure that the Championships will stand on solid fiscal ground for the future, while retaining the positive aspects of the Championships that are central to a quality experience for student-athletes, including appropriate access and competitive equity.

On a personal note, having seen every NCAA Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championship since 1973, since instituting the new format, in my opinion, the last two years' Final Championship Competitions have provided some of the best performances in NCAA history, which have in turn yielded some of the best Outdoor Track & Field Championships in NCAA history. Further, this format has virtually eliminated the annual controversy that previously accompanied the announcement of the student-athletes who had earned qualification into the NCAA Championships. The current format has delivered two fantastic Final Championship Competitions, and I believe that it has done so with competitive equity achieved through head-to-head competition. Further, this format provides a consistent Final Championship Competition structure from year-to-year, which maximizes the opportunities to focus on the development of strategies that can diversify and enhance revenue streams, and to collaborate with corporate, media, and host partners.