REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
FEBRUARY 22-23, 2010, MEETING

***KEY ITEMS*.**

1. **Examination of the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP).** The NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance continued its examination of the APP to determine the program's effectiveness in reaching the membership's goals for academic reform. This review will continue through the summer and will include further discussions regarding the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmarks and penalty structures, filters and waiver directives.

2. **Review of Academic Eligibility Standards for Prospective Student-Athletes.** The committee reviewed comprehensive data regarding the requirements for initial eligibility and transfer eligibility of prospective student-athletes. The committee reviewed potential enhancements to the current initial- and transfer-eligibility standards, which may assist with identifying those student-athletes who are academically prepared for college work, as well as with identifying those student-athletes who are academically underprepared and may benefit from academic support and accommodations. The committee will continue to discuss these topics in June when it meets jointly with the NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet.

***ACTION ITEMS*.**

1. **Legislative Items.**

   - None.

2. **Nonlegislative Items.**

   - None.

***INFORMATIONAL ITEMS*.**

1. **Examination of the APP.** The committee continued its review of the APP and began to address key research issues and questions related to the program's effectiveness. At this meeting, the committee initiated a framework for possible enhancements, which will prompt further research and development of potential concepts for review during the committee's June meeting.

After review of the principles that served as a foundation for recent academic reform efforts, the committee affirmed its commitment to the stated goals of the APP and agreed that its principles are still applicable. The committee further noted that even with the adjustments and modifications made to the program over the years, the essential structure remains relatively simple and easy to comprehend, as demonstrated by the widespread acceptance and general understanding of those within athletics, higher education and the general public.

As the committee turned its attention to the penalty structure, it was reminded that the overall purpose of the APP is not to penalize teams, but instead to strive for academic improvement and increased graduation rates among student-athletes. However, data demonstrate that some teams and institutions improve academically after experiencing consequences for consistent academic underperformance. Taking this into consideration, the committee discussed whether the APP acts as a deterrent for avoiding academic underperformance and if the current structure is a sufficient motivating factor toward improvement for teams who find themselves in the penalty structure. The committee examined several modifications to the current penalty program, including the integration of contemporaneous penalties within Occasion-One Historical Penalties, the development of additional historical penalties and potential changes to the current Occasion-Four Historical Penalties to focus on the underperforming squad, rather than the entire athletics program.

In addition to considering changes to the current APP penalty structure, the committee began to examine the APP penalty benchmarks and filters. The committee is considering whether the institutional academic and resource characteristics and by-sport comparison historical penalty filters that are part of the "improvement-plus" model are effective and whether additional standards, such as a Graduation Success Rate (GSR) benchmark, may be warranted. During its June meeting, the committee will continue its examination and it anticipates making any recommendations to the NCAA Division I Board of Directors later this year.

2. Head Coaches' APR Portfolio. The committee received a progress report regarding the Head Coaches' APR Portfolio, specifically noting the implementation timeline and the verification process of the head coaches' employment history. This spring head coaches will be able to view their head coaching employment history dating back to the 2003-04 academic year in the sports of football, women's indoor and outdoor track and field, baseball, and men's and women's basketball. Reporting for all remaining NCAA Division I sponsored sports will occur during the 2010-11 academic year. The committee supported the staff's planned outreach to various coaches' associations to encourage the verification of information by both active and inactive coaches in their respective sports. The Head Coaches' APR Portfolio Web site, containing information on the six initial

sports, is scheduled for public release in summer 2010. The Web site will report each head coach's employment history and the team's single-year APR for each year of the head coach's tenure.

3. **NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program Supplemental Support Fund (SSF).** The committee received a report regarding the SSF. Thirty-three limited-resource institutions are eligible to apply for funding during the 2009-10 academic year. These funds are intended to provide resources for new or enhanced programs developed to support student-athlete academic performance and for professional development opportunities for academic support administrators. Institutions that receive funds are required to report on the use of these funds and implementation of current APR Improvement Plans. Testimonials provided by institutions receiving funding in prior years indicate initial positive benefits to their respective academic support services. The SSF currently is being integrated into other outreach efforts led by the NCAA educational affairs staff, including a one-day professional development workshop for representatives of all SSF-eligible institutions.

   The committee directed the staff to provide written information for its April meeting that includes recommendations regarding the specific metrics that should be used in the future to evaluate the effectiveness of the SSF program; available evidence regarding the effect of the first two years of the funds; detailed information regarding the uses of the funds to date; and other data or information that would help assess the program at this early stage.

   Lastly, the committee continued its discussion regarding a request for a possible extension of the program, which currently is scheduled to conclude with the 2009-10 academic year. In this regard, the committee requested that the staff provide for its next meeting information regarding possible future funding sources that could underwrite the continuation of the SSF program.

4. **Exemption for Contemporaneous Penalties for Men's Basketball Student-Athletes Who Receive Athletics Aid Per NCAA Proposal No. 2009-97.** The committee determined it would amend its policies and procedures to create an additional waiver for contemporaneous penalties for men's basketball student-athletes who might receive athletics aid if Proposal No. 2009-97 is adopted. Assuming such action, this policy change would be effective with the collection of the 2010-11 APR data. Proposal No. 2009-97 specifies that a men's basketball student-athlete who receives athletically related aid in the academic years following the departure of a head coach would not be considered a counter, provided certain criteria are met. This concept initially was developed by the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group to provide additional flexibility to men's basketball student-athletes to earn their college

degrees when their head coaches leave, particularly for those student-athletes who are in their final two to three semesters of a degree program and may not wish to transfer. If Proposal No. 2009-97 is adopted, this waiver for contemporaneous penalties would be added for men's basketball student-athletes who would receive athletics aid under the new rule; thus, if such a student-athlete becomes an "0/2" during any regular academic term, he would not subject the team to contemporaneous penalties. The addition of this waiver would be consistent with exemptions currently in place, as this financial aid also would be exempt from team financial limits.

5. Review of Initial-Eligibility Standards. The NCAA research staff provided comprehensive data on the Division I initial-eligibility requirements and reviewed several initial-eligibility enhancements under consideration by the Academic Cabinet. NCAA research continues to indicate that a combination of standardized test scores and high school core-course grades is a better predictor of academic success than using either grades or tests alone. However, when examined independently, the high school core grade-point average is two to three times more predictive of first-year college academic success than test scores. This is an increase from earlier years, as the high school grade-point average has become more predictive as the number of required core courses has increased.

The committee reviewed a tiered approach to initial eligibility that focuses on preparing prospective student-athletes to be academically successful in the college setting. Under such an option, a prospective student-athlete who presents an academic profile indicating preparedness for college and who is regularly admitted by his or her certifying institution would have full access to financial aid, practice and competition in the initial year of enrollment. Prospective student-athletes admitted with academic profiles predicting greater challenges in achieving collegiate success also would have access to financial aid and some level of athletics participation, but would be required to participate in specified interventions during the first year of college enrollment. Some examples of possible interventions include mandatory learning assessments, required academic support plans and limits on missed class time and travel. Such interventions would be designed to improve the quality of the long-term educational experience of student-athletes who are less academically prepared when they arrive on a college campus. The committee will continue to consider this topic during its joint meeting with the Academic Cabinet in June.

6. Review of Two-Year College Transfer Student-Athletes. The committee reviewed preliminary data on two-year college transfer student-athletes submitted by the Division I membership for the first time in fall 2009. NCAA research indicates two-year college transfers accounted for approximately five percent of all Division I student-athletes in the

2007-08 academic year, and that this percentage has declined in each of the previous four years. Baseball and men's basketball have the highest rate of two-year college transfers, while women's sports other than basketball have the lowest rate of two-year transfers. Generally, data indicate that two-year college transfers tend to be less academically prepared and do not perform as well as nontransfers and four-year college transfers; however, the graduation rate for two-year college transfers has increased recently and the rate of two-year transfer student-athletes departing their four-year institutions while not eligible has decreased.

The committee also reviewed preliminary findings regarding the academic performance of two-year college transfers while at their respective two-year institutions. Specifically, the data indicate that a prospective student-athlete's overall grade-point average at the two-year college is the most significant predictor of first-year academic outcomes at the four-year college. The committee also noted that credits earned in any particular subject area are not related to the first-year grade-point average at the four-year institution, except that there is a negative relationship between the number of physical education credits earned at the two-year college and the first-year grade-point average at the four-year institution. On average, nonqualifiers earn more overall credits, transferable credits and subject-specific credits (English, math, science) than qualifiers while at the two-year college; however, this difference could be attributed to nonqualifiers' longer average enrollment at the two-year college. The committee also reviewed initial analyses on first-year outcomes of two-year college transfer student-athletes in men's basketball and football who entered Division I institutions in the 2008 fall term. NCAA research indicates that only six percent of two-year college transfer student-athletes in these sports were required to fulfill remediation requirements on enrollment at the four-year college. The committee will continue to consider this topic during its joint meeting with the Academic Cabinet in June.

7. Recent Academic Performance of Teams Participating in Spring 2009 Historical Penalty Hearings. The committee received an update on the academic performance of teams that participated in historical penalty hearings before the committee in 2009. It was noted that many of the penalized teams showed improvement in their single-year APR. The committee also heard a summary of the waiver decisions the staff has made for teams subject to historical penalties during the 2009-10 academic year.

8. Educational Initiatives Regarding Changes of Degree Programs and Majors. During its October 2009 meeting, the committee requested an update regarding education related to waiver opportunities for student-athletes who may wish to change their respective courses of study, but run the risk of failing to meet progress-toward-degree requirements if they do so. While current progress-toward-degree waiver policies and procedures

promote flexibility for student-athletes facing this dilemma, it often appears that institutional administrators, faculty and student-athletes are not aware of the availability of such avenues for relief. In response to the committee's concerns regarding this environment, the staff agreed to provide information summarizing waiver outcomes for student-athletes seeking relief from NCAA eligibility requirements due to major changes and to outline educational initiatives for the membership and academic partner organizations. It was noted that since the 2003-04 academic year, 244 progress-toward-degree waivers citing major/degree change have been submitted by the membership, of which 226 were approved. An overview of the legislative and waiver flexibility currently available to student-athletes who wish to change degree programs, as well as best practices for facilitating such transitions, will be emphasized through various educational outlets starting spring 2010.

9. **APR Adjustment Requests for Student-Athletes Who Meet the Criteria for the Missed-Term Exception.** The committee approved an amendment to its policies and procedures to permit adjustments to the calculation of the APR to discount the lost retention point one time during a student-athlete's career when he or she loses the retention point for a term but satisfies the criteria for the missed-term exception, as outlined in NCAA Bylaw 14.4.3.5-(a). Such adjustments will be processed automatically during the data submission phase. During fall 2009, 35 requests were received for this specific adjustment and 31 were approved. The requests that were denied lacked supporting documentation. This policy change will improve the efficiency of the data collection process and will reduce administrative burden on member institutions. Programming and validation checks within the APP data collection portal will ensure the criteria for the adjustment have been met by the student-athlete. In addition, verification that institutions are applying the automatic adjustment properly will occur through the APP data review process. Finally, this policy change will be effective with 2009-10 APR data submitted fall 2010 and will not apply to any prior cohorts.

10. **APR Adjustment Requests for a Student-Athlete Who Receives a Medical-Absence Waiver.** The committee approved an amendment to its policies and procedures to permit an APR adjustment to discount the lost eligibility point and/or retention point for a student-athlete who suffers an incapacitating injury or illness. Such requests must be supported by a letter of approval of a medical-absence waiver from the conference office (or in the case of an independent institution, from the NCAA Division I Progress-Toward-Degree Waivers Committee), that coincides with when the student-athlete lost the APR point(s). Also, such adjustments will be processed automatically during the data submission phase. The current APR adjustment directive permits institutions to request adjustments for lost eligibility and/or retention points for student-athletes who suffer incapacitating injuries or illnesses that clearly are supported by contemporaneous medical

documentation. Such documentation must indicate that a student-athlete was unable to be academically successful and/or retained as a result of the incapacitating physical or mental circumstances. Generally, if an institution presents a letter of approval of a medical-absence waiver that coincides with when the student-athlete lost the APR point(s), the staff has approved the adjustment request. The staff has not required copies of the medical documentation with the waiver application because the threshold for the injury or illness as outlined in Bylaw 14.4.3.6-(a) mirrors the language currently in the APR adjustment directive, in that the student-athlete's injury or illness must clearly indicate that a student-athlete was unable to be academically successful and/or retained as a result of the incapacitating physical or mental circumstances. In fall 2009, 46 requests were received for this specific adjustment and all were approved by the staff. This policy change will improve the efficiency of the data collection process and will reduce administrative burden on member institutions. Programming and validation checks within the APP data collection portal will ensure this criterion for the adjustment has been met. In addition, verification of proper application of the automatic adjustment will occur through the APP data review process. Lastly, this policy change will be effective with 2009-10 APR data submitted fall 2010 and will not apply to any prior cohorts.

11. Signature Page for APR Adjustment Requests and Appeals. The committee approved an amendment to its policies and procedures to permit the signature of the institution's director of athletics, senior woman administrator, faculty athletics representative or director of compliance to be acceptable for APR adjustment requests and appeals. Currently, each adjustment request and any related appeals of denied decisions require the signature of the institution's chancellor or president or his or her designee. This policy change will increase the efficiency of the APR adjustment process, as it will allow one of four other individuals to sign the signature page for APR adjustments in the absence of the chancellor or president. It is important to note that all other APP waivers (e.g., penalty waiver, deadline extension requests) still will require the signature of the institution's chancellor or president. Lastly, this policy change will be effective with APR adjustment requests and appeals submitted fall 2010.

12. APR Adjustment for a Transfer Student-Athlete Who Subsequently Graduates from a Different Four-Year Institution. The NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance Subcommittee on Data Collection and Reporting considered the concept of providing relief from a lost retention point if a transferring student-athlete subsequently graduates from a second four-year institution within a certain timeframe (e.g., four years, five years). Currently, an adjustment is available to discount the lost retention point in those instances when a student-athlete transferred while presenting a cumulative grade-point average of at least 2.600 and meeting additional criteria. The subcommittee agreed to table this discussion until after another year of APR adjustments

have been processed to determine the frequency of such circumstances. At that time, the subcommittee will determine whether this concept should be reviewed further.

13. Data Submission Requirements for an Institution Transitioning From Division I. The Subcommittee on Data Collection and Reporting continued its discussion regarding policies related to facets of the APP for institutions and/or teams that transition from Division I. Specifically, the subcommittee considered which APP data submission requirements these institutions are required to meet and how APP penalties apply in these situations. The subcommittee noted that during the last several months, the staff has been notified of two institutions that plan to transition from Division I and another institution that has decided to abandon its pursuit of Division I membership and return to Division II. The subcommittee also noted this issue presents unique circumstances that were not contemplated by the committee during the development of its current policies. The subcommittee directed the staff to further develop options for its consideration for these situations and it anticipates making a recommendation to the full committee in April.

14. Timeline for APP Data Review. The Subcommittee on Data Collection and Reporting noted modifications made to the current data review process timeline, effective immediately. Specifically:

a. Selection of institutions will begin in January each year and institutions will be notified of their selection shortly thereafter; and

b. The review will be conducted in two separate segments, with GSR data being reviewed February through May and APR data to be reviewed June through October.

To enhance the consistency, accuracy and integrity of APP data submitted in prior data collections and in the future, an earlier start to the data review process is warranted. At present, the data review process often is interrupted by the campus activities surrounding the start of the fall term, which can create delays in the institution's responses to the requests for documentation necessary to complete the data review. The change in the timeline will allow appropriate time for institutions to provide documentation. In addition, this timeline change will reduce delays in data corrections to GSR, as institutions will have the opportunity to correct previous years' data errors simultaneously with the current GSR data collection, which begins in early spring.

15. APP Data Reviews. The Subcommittee on Data Collection and Reporting received a status report on the 30 institutions selected to have their APP data reviewed during the

2009-10 academic year. These institutions are being reviewed for the accuracy of the eligibility, graduation and retention data entered in the APP data collection system for the academic years 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08. The subcommittee also received a final report on the five institutions that were being reviewed for the accuracy of the GSR data entered in the APP data collection system for the 2002-03 cohort. In addition, the subcommittee was informed of the completion of the data review for one institution from the 2008-09 data review class. It is anticipated that all data reviews for the 2009-10 academic year will be completed by March 2010.

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