



Foundation for the Future

2015-21

2015-21

NCAA Division II Strategic Plan

Addendum / January 2021

A STRATEGIC
VISION FOR
DIVISION II





DIVISION II

300+ MEMBERS

23 CONFERENCES

120,000 STUDENT-ATHLETES

25 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

1 MISSION

To provide value and significance for Division II members by supporting the purpose of higher education and striking a balance among academic excellence; athletics competition; community engagement; and social and personal development and wellness.



As the 2015-21 Division II Strategic Plan enters its final scheduled year, the Division II Presidents Council and the Division II Planning and Finance Committee agreed to extend the plan through 2023 to align with the timing of several important Division II and NCAA initiatives.

Primarily, launching a successor plan in 2024 aligns procedurally with the next Division II Membership Census and the beginning of the next phase of the NCAA's broadcast agreement. In addition, the current plan has proven to be effective and is consistently aligned with the Division II membership's values to address operational needs, which supports extending the plan without risk.

This addendum highlights successful implementation to date of key initiatives that support the 2015-21 Division II Strategic Plan, outlines steps necessary to develop the next iteration of the plan, and illustrates action the Division II membership and governance structure took throughout 2020 to navigate the extraordinary circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep the strategic plan on track.





Our Plan

In April 2015, Division II formally adopted a six-year strategic plan that builds upon the division's unique attributes and a position of fiscal strength to guide future decisions. The plan supports Division II's balanced and inclusive approach that affords student-athletes the opportunity to explore their varied academic and social interests, to grow as productive contributors to their communities.

The Division II Planning and Finance Committee oversaw a midterm assessment of the plan in 2018 based on results from the second Division II Membership Census to ensure that what the division committed to in 2015 remains on course. The midterm assessment reaffirmed the commitment to the plan's mission and vision and to the values that drive them.

Even as the plan enters its sixth year, it continues to support Division II's bedrock principles:

- ▶ Division II's Life in the Balance philosophy, which over time has evolved into a stabilizing mantra that drives decision making and policy.
- ▶ The membership appreciates and intentionally promotes the division's attributes to set themselves apart in a competitive higher education market.
- ▶ The governance structure continues to be trusted to manage the division's affairs, especially in times of extreme need, as evidenced by how established processes and principles within the structure helped the membership navigate the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- ▶ Division II values a strong student-athlete voice, both in the governance structure as well as in community to advocate for principles supporting equity, diversity and inclusion.



What We Have Accomplished

SPO 1 ACADEMICS AND LIFE SKILLS

Goals

- ▶ **Help Student-Athletes Earn Their Degrees**
- ▶ **Help Student-Athletes Obtain and Develop Leadership Skills**
- ▶ **Help Student-Athletes Maintain Healthful and Productive Lifestyles**
- ▶ **Help Student-Athletes Engage with Their Communities**

Key initiatives either adopted or enhanced since the 2018 midterm assessment

NIL Legislation. The Presidents Council endorsed proposals for the 2021 NCAA Convention to allow student-athletes to benefit from their name, image and likeness by promoting athletically related work products and third-party commercial products.

Total Package Student-Athlete. The Division II SAAC has developed initiatives supporting the overarching goal called the “Total Package Student-Athlete”:

- ▶ **Total: Mental health.** Break the stigma and inspire others to promote mental wellness.
- ▶ **Package: Diversity and inclusion.** Celebrate the diversity within athletics and promote inclusion to enhance the student-athlete experience.
- ▶ **Student: Professional development.** Prepare student-athletes for experiences and challenges in life after athletics.
- ▶ **Athlete: Love2Play.** Encourage young athletes to play multiple sports and to have fun while they play.

SAAC Super Region Conventions. Two Super Region conventions have been conducted already with great success, and while recent editions have been canceled due to the coronavirus, successors will be rescheduled soon to continue enhancing the student-athlete voice.

Access for Nonqualifiers. Based on feedback from the Division II SAAC and Coaches Connection groups, the Presidents Council supported permissive legislation to allow access to institutional athletics aid and access to practice to all incoming freshman student-athletes and two-year college transfers, regardless of their initial-eligibility status. The rationale centers on the importance of student-athletes staying connected to their teams and how that can factor into mental health.

“This package of [NIL] recommendations includes some very prominent and profound legislation to modernize Division II’s rules and policies, and they follow the NCAA Board of Governors’ guiding principles to ensure student-athletes are treated similarly to nonathlete students, unless a compelling reason exists to differentiate.”



Chris Graham
Commissioner of the
Rocky Mountain
Athletic Conference
and chair of the Division II
Management Council



SPO 2 ATHLETICS OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

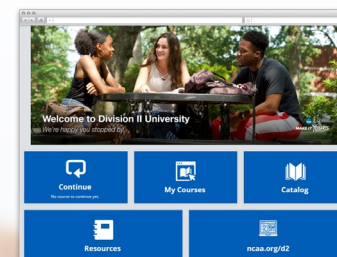
Goals

- ▶ *Help Campuses and Conferences Maintain Engaged and Function Athletics Operations*
- ▶ *Help Campuses and Conferences Maintain Engaged and Function Compliance Operations*

Key initiatives either adopted or enhanced since the 2018 midterm assessment

Division II University. After a successful first year using DII U to administer the required annual coaches certification, four courses on NCAA rules and one on health and safety will be added. Additional future modules will target other Division II constituents, including courses on gameday operations and customer service, as well as courses directed at faculty athletics representatives.

Coaches Connection. Connectors have now been established for nearly all Division II championship sports to provide coaches with a forum for sharing information, sharing their voice in policy and decision making, and advocating for the values of Division II.



SPO 3 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Goals

- ▶ *Help Campuses and Conferences Create Diverse and Inclusive Environments*
- ▶ *Build Environments at the NCAA National Office and within the Governance Structure in which Diversity and Inclusion are Recognized and Valued*

Key initiatives either adopted or enhanced since the 2018 midterm assessment

Diversity/Inclusion Designee. Legislation was adopted at the 2020 Convention requiring each Division II school and conference to name a diversity and inclusion designee for athletics who will serve as the primary contact for diversity and inclusion information from the NCAA national office.

Mentoring Program. Division II has enhanced a partnership with the Athletics Directors Association that targets aspiring ADs, particularly women and ethnic minorities, to advance their careers. The program now features one and one-half days at the NCAA national office in October and a follow-up session at the annual NACDA convention in June.

Inclusion Forum. Division II will fund activation teams from approximately 40 institutions to attend the 2021 forum and develop institution-specific action plans to enhance diversity and inclusion on campus.



SPO 4 GAME DAY AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Goals

- ▶ *Provide Outstanding Division II Game Day Experiences at the Local, Conference and National Levels*
- ▶ *Create Fair and Equitable Regional and National Competition Through Consistent Selection Criteria and Appropriate Access*

Key initiatives either adopted or enhanced since the 2018 midterm assessment

National Championships Festivals. A representative task force appointed to review the festival experience submitted more than two dozen enhancements, including the establishment of a men's and women's basketball festival to be conducted in the "off year" of the normal festival rotation.

Seeding at Finals. All team sport committees now seed teams advancing from the regionals to help ensure the best matchups at the final site.

Neutrality. The division is conducting a pilot that allows preliminary-round hosts in select sports to conduct the same kinds of pregame promotions and celebrations they run during their regular-season home games before resuming "neutrality" during the actual competition.

Game Day Ops. Division II established a partnership with the Disney Institute to promote excellent customer service among game day staff and improve the overall game environment at Division II contests.



SPO 5 MEMBERSHIP AND POSITIONING INITIATIVES

Goals

- ▶ *Foster Fiscal Responsibility at the Local, Conference, Regional and National Levels*
- ▶ *Continue Developing Member Institutions and Conferences that Support the Strategic Position and Philosophy of Division II Intercollegiate Athletics*
- ▶ *Enhance the Public's Knowledge and Appreciation of Division II*

Key initiatives either adopted or enhanced since the 2018 midterm assessment

Long-Range Budget. The Division II Presidents Council approved a new long-range budget through 2032 that aligns the Division II revenue allocation with the NCAA's 10-year financial plan and ensures the division's future for the long term.

What DII Can Do for You. Division II created a 12-page booklet and accompanying PowerPoint presentation to provide audiences – particularly those not familiar with the NCAA's three-division composition – with a promotional summary of how Division II operates and what its members value.

Division II Brand. As the Division II membership embraces the Make It Yours tagline and the Life in the Balance philosophy to help student-athletes make the Division II experience their own through academics, athletics, community engagement and more, the division continues to explore unique ways to promote both for the membership and prospective student-athletes.



Foundation for the Future

How Division II Presidents and Chancellors Helped Ensure the Success of the Division II Strategic Plan

Among the most important decisions the Division II Presidents Council made in 2015 when adopting the Division II Strategic Plan was to sufficiently fund it. As all presidents and chancellors are aware, strategic initiatives require financial support to be effective.

Accordingly, the Presidents Council committed \$5.7 million through the course of the strategic plan to fund a 10-program “Foundation for the Future” initiative that would become an integral component of the Division II Strategic Plan moving forward.

And while not everyone involved could have predicted it at the time, many of these programs have been so successful that they are now intertwined permanently within the Division II fabric. Five in fact have been approved to continue being funded as part of the Division II base budget even after the Foundation for the Future allocation ends in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

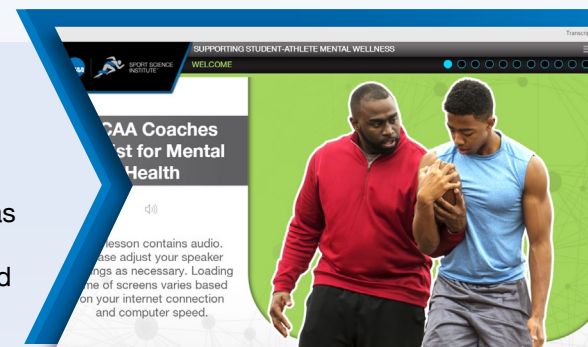
Programs Now Part of the Division II Base Budget:

DIVISION II UNIVERSITY

The immediate goal was for “DII U” to replace the antiquated annual coaches certification exam, a proposal that was resoundingly approved at the 2019 NCAA Convention. DII U was much preferred because of its interactive and easy-to-access courses that creatively and more practically educated constituents on everything from recruiting and eligibility rules and governance to improving student-athlete health and wellness. Since then, DII U has literally changed the way members understand and follow Division II operating procedures and principles.

COACHES CONNECTION EXPANSION

As was the case with Division II University, the Coaches Connection program was but a fledgling in 2015, having been established in 2012-13 as a pilot program for football and women’s volleyball. The pilot’s initial success warranted an expansion in 2014-15 to include men’s and women’s tennis and men’s and women’s soccer. Now, after having been part of the Foundation for the Future effort, Coaches Connection encompasses nearly all Division II championship sports and is among the most transformative programs in Division II history.



SAAC SUPER REGION CONVENTION

The Foundation for the Future initiative focused on enhancing student-athletes' roles in the governance structure as well. While the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee participates annually at the NCAA Convention, the Super Region conventions provide a convention experience for conference and institutional SAACs. That means even more student-athletes can participate in the governance structure and better understand issues affecting all Division II student-athletes.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ATHLETICS DIRECTORS

The program for first-year Division II athletics directors has helped new ADs to hit the ground running. Originally, programming was limited to one-half day at the annual NCAA Convention, but the program has been upgraded to feature one and one-half days at the NCAA national office in October (in conjunction with the existing D2 ADA and CCA meetings there at that time) and a follow-up session at the annual NACDA convention in June.



NAAC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Foundation for the Future initiative allowed the National Association for Athletics Compliance to provide Division II schools and conferences an interactive educational training program to help administrators maintain ethical compliance programs.



Programs Receiving One-Time Funding Through the FFF:

Academic Metrics Review. This grant allowed Division II to review metrics for academic success, improve the accuracy of data collection and strengthen the foundation upon which academic policy decisions are made.



Degree-Completion Awards. A total of \$440,000 was distributed to provide additional funding to student-athletes who have exhausted their athletics eligibility to help them complete their undergraduate degrees.



Helper Helper. Helper Helper is an online community engagement platform that institutions used to connect student-athletes to meaningful volunteer experiences and log their community engagement efforts.



Transportation for Community Engagement. This FFF grant provided bus transportation to Division II championships for community members who participate in community engagement events.



Conference Distribution. Each conference received a one-time distribution of \$50,000 to support initiatives in academics, broadcast/promotions, officiating improvement and branding efforts.



Division II in Action

Part of why Division II managed its affairs as efficiently as it did during the COVID-19 outbreak was because members and national office staff relied on an already proven governance structure and budgetary principles and procedures implemented previously to handle challenges. While the pandemic was unprecedented, Division II's call to action was not. Here's a high-level overview:

March

- ▶ NCAA cancels winter and spring sport championships.
- ▶ Division II Administrative Committee (AdCom) acts immediately to mitigate concerns.

April-May

- ▶ AdCom meets weekly to address needs.
- ▶ Presidents Council addresses projected budget shortfall via previously established processes.
- ▶ Weekly calls added with CCA and ADA Officers, as well as CCACA officers.
- ▶ Communication network deployed to update/educate the membership via email, SAAC, Coaches Connection, social media and webinars.

June-July

- ▶ Governance and sport committees convene regularly to discuss fall sport championships.

August

- ▶ Amidst ongoing health and safety concerns, the Division II Presidents Council announces that fall sport championships will not be conducted during 2020-21.
- ▶ AdCom again convenes quickly to provide flexibility for fall sport student-athletes.

September-December

- ▶ Governance and sport committees convene regularly to manage winter and spring sport championship logistics, including additional seasons of competition for winter sport student-athletes who compete during 2020-21.

Decision Process



Balancing the Budget

THE PRINCIPLES

Maintain a cash reserve comprising at least 70% of the annual operating revenue. The reserve comes from:

- ▶ The prior year's cash reserve;
- ▶ The current year's budget surplus; and
- ▶ \$15 million event cancellation insurance policy for the DI Men's Basketball Championship.

THE BOTTOM LINE

FY20 Budget-to-Actual

Division II Allocation-Based Revenue	\$9,542,392
Other Non-DII Revenue	\$15,082,500
Surplus	\$1,694,164
Expenses	\$31,248,428
TOTAL	(\$4,929,372)

While the division's revenue allocation was far less than originally budgeted, the projected expenses were reduced from the cancellation of championships. The division also received the \$15 million in event cancellation insurance coverage, which helped mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the 2020 fiscal year budget.

Key Players

DIVISION II ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Allison Garrett
President, Emporia State University

Sandra Jordan
Chancellor, University of South Carolina Aiken

Elwood Robinson
Chancellor, Winston-Salem State University

Chris Graham
Commissioner, Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference

Jim Johnson
Director of Athletics, Pittsburg State University

Courtney Lovely Evans
Director of Athletics, Palm Beach Atlantic University

DIVISION II CCA OFFICERS

Erin Lind
Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

Tom Daeger
Great Midwest Athletic Conference

Dan Mara
Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference

Matt Wilson
Gulf South Conference

DIVISION II ADA OFFICERS

Chris Ratcliff
Rogers State University

Joel Smith
Chadron State College

Bren Stevens
University of Charleston (West Virginia)

Kim Pate
Lenoir-Rhyne University

Kirby Garry
California State University, Monterey Bay

CCACA CO-LEADS

Melissa Reilly
East Coast Conference

Ellen O'Brien
Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference

NCAA Division II

**MAKE IT
YOURS**

Next Steps

Strategic Planning Timeline

JANUARY 2021 TO AUGUST 2021

Facilitate strategic planning discussions for the new plan and gather feedback from committees and associations.

SUMMER TO FALL 2021

From feedback and discussions, create questions for the 2022 Division II Census.

JANUARY 2022

Launch the new census with the membership.

APRIL 2022

Management and Presidents Councils review census results.

MAY 2022 TO APRIL 2023

Use census results to facilitate changes to the strategic plan.

JULY/AUGUST 2023

Management and Presidents Councils approve the plan.

JANUARY 2024

Launch the new strategic plan at the NCAA Convention.





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