

# HIGHER ED WATCH'S ACADEMIC BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

We chose to use federal graduation rate data instead of the NCAA's "Graduation Success Rate" (GSR) because we wanted to compare the graduation rate of the football team to the overall school. The GSR takes into account transfer students and isn't comparable to any other federal graduation data.

## **STEP ONE: GRADUATION RATES**

Start with the football team's federal graduation rate. Then deduct or add points for the average of two equally important "graduation gaps": A) the football team's graduation rate vs. the overall school's graduation rate; B) the football team's black-white graduation rate gap vs. the overall school's black-white graduation rate gap.

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Football} \\ \text{Grad} \\ \text{Rate} \\ \text{(GR)} \end{array}} - \frac{\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Overall} \\ \text{School's GR} \\ - \\ \text{Football GR} \end{array}} + \boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Football Black-White} \\ \text{GR Gap} - \\ \text{Overall School Black-} \\ \text{White GR Gap} \end{array}}}{2}$$

So if a football team is doing a better job graduating its players than the overall school, (A) will be negative and the team will gain points. And if the gap between the graduation rates of the football team's white and black players is smaller than the school's gap, (B) will be negative and the team will also gain points.

## **STEP TWO: ACADEMIC PROGRESS RATES**

Next, each team gains or loses points based on how far its APR is above or below the national median for Division I-A teams (current median=934).

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Graduation} \\ \text{Points from} \\ \text{Step One} \end{array}} + \boxed{\begin{array}{c} \text{Football Team APR} - \\ \text{Median APR for Division} \\ \text{I-A Football Teams} \\ \text{(934)} \end{array}}$$

The most one team's APR is above or below the median APR is around 30 points. Given that most football teams' graduation rates are around 60 to 70 percent, the APR is about half as important as graduation rate data in the formula. The half-weighting is because

the APR is not as rigorous a test of academic performance as actually graduating. The APR bar is set extremely low; athletes receive half of their total APR score for just being enrolled in school, and the other half for completing 20 percent of their courses toward a degree each year, with no minimum GPA.

**EXAMPLE**

Louisiana State University (LSU)

Football GR: 38

Overall GR: 56.8

Football White GR: 50

Football Black GR: 32

Overall White GR: 57.9

Overall Black GR: 51.2

APR: 941

Black-White Football GR Disparity: (50-32) = 18

Black-White Overall GR Disparity: (57.9-51.2) = 6.7

ABCS Formula:

$$38 - \frac{[56.8-38] + [18-6.7]}{2} = 22.95$$

$$22.95 + [941 - 934] = \mathbf{29.95}$$