

Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference
Faculty Athletic Representatives Meeting
Chair – Dr. Carmen Cain, University of Mary
Wednesday, July 8, 2026

Action Items.

1. Recommendation: To amend the NSIC academic awards language as outlined in Supplement FAR-A.

Effective Date. Immediate.

Rationale. The amendments provide clarifying language for the NSIC academic awards. Specific to the Myles Brand award, the group discussed the need to add “undergraduate” to the language to assist in the implementation of the term “academic senior” to provide clarity for when a student-athlete can be nominated and receive the award.

Unanimously approved by the FARs.

2. Recommendation: To create a working group of FARs and compliance administrators to develop language for an NSIC Team GPA award with the goal of implementation during the 2026-27 academic year.

Effective Date. Immediate.

Rationale. The working group allows the opportunity for compliance and FARs to work together to strengthen the details and implementation of a Team GPA award.

Unanimously approved by the FARs.

Informational Items.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks. The group was welcomed and everyone introduced themselves. FARs shared some initial best practices related to budget, compliance, student-athlete well-being, and academics, including student-athlete classes for freshman.
2. 2026 SAAC Summit Recap. Dr. Timothy Dudley, University of Minnesota Crookston, provided the group with a recap from the SAAC Summit that was hosted at Minnesota Crookston. Two items will be voted on from SAAC including approving the 2026-27 NSIC SAAC Initiatives and implementing a cap value for NSIC Cup points.
3. Conference Council Meeting Preparation. The group was provided with an overview of the items to expect during the Conference Council meeting including updates from the Management Council and Midco Sports launch. Campuses were surveyed on sport sponsorship interest level and women’s flag football and women’s wrestling have continued to increase in interest.
4. NCAA Division II FAR Connection Update. (Chelsee Short) The group had their first meetings which included discussion and suggestions of topics for NCAA Convention. Concern across conferences with how much student-athletes are having to fundraise.

5. 2026-27 NSIC FAR Meetings. The group discussed having monthly zoom meetings to be able to discuss important updates. FARs currently meet once a semester. Fluctuate the timing of meetings throughout the year (one month in the morning, one month in the afternoon).
 - a. 2027 NCAA Convention. January 13-15, 2026 – Anaheim, CA. NSIC meeting will be held on Thursday morning. No Division I at convention this year so it will be shorter. Interest in coordinating lunch for FARs after meeting.
6. NSIC Academic Awards Review. The group reviewed NCAA and NSIC award updates.
 - a. NCAA Awards Program Update. NCAA will no longer have their awards program and there is no more WOTY.
 - b. Academic Awards Recognition Best Practices. Challenges in relying on athletic department for awards which end up being rushed. Some schools provide end-of-season banquets but lack public recognition. Positive experience in recognizing student-athletes during halftime of competitions with fans and faculty present. This topic will continue to be on the agenda for monthly meetings to advance discussion.
 - c. NSIC Award Review. Compliance talked through award language and suggested edits to clarify language, specifically for undergraduate versus graduate student-athletes using “academic senior” language instead of “exhausted eligibility,” and using
 - d. Team of Academic Excellence. Comments were shared from the compliance meeting regarding the criteria and logistics of implementation. Concerns were raised with institutions differing in how GPAs are calculated. Graduate GPAs are often higher than undergraduate GPAs which could cause variables throughout the conference.

Participants.

Name, Title	Institution
Dr. Marcia Entwistle	Augustana University
Dr. Heather Bart	Augustana University
Dr. Shannon Norman	Bemidji State University
Jennifer Myers	Concordia University, St. Paul
Karen Crane	University of Jamestown
Dr. Carmen Cain	University of Mary
Dr. Tim Dudley	University of Minnesota Crookston
Dr. Katie Schofield	University of Minnesota Duluth
Dr. Jeffrey Pribyl	Minnesota State University, Mankato
Dr. Ellen Fagerstrom	Minnesota State University Moorhead
Dr. Julia Poplin	Minnesota State University Moorhead
Dr. Kristi Berg*	Minot State University
Dr. Chelsee Shortt	Northern State University
Mike Thompson	University of Sioux Falls
Dr. Sonya Vierstraete	Southwest Minnesota State University
Dr. William Hudson	St. Cloud State University
Dr. Charles Parker*	Wayne State College
Marcy Faircloth	Winona State University
Erin Lind, Commissioner	Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference
Nick Kornder, Assistant Commissioner	Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference
Andrea Palmen, Assistant Commissioner	Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

**Not in attendance*

NSIC Academic Awards

3.3.5 Dr. Britton Scholar-Athlete Award for Academic Excellence and the Willis R. Kelly Scholar-Athlete Award for Academic Excellence.

3.3.5.1 Each full member institution selects its single male nominee from a conference sponsored sport based on the criteria listed below. The nominees shall comprise the men's NSIC Honor Student-Athlete Award winners. The award is named for Dr. William Britton who was the Institutional Representative for Bemidji State University.

3.3.5.2 Each full member institution selects its single female nominee from a conference sponsored sport based on the criteria listed below. The nominees shall comprise the women's NSIC Honor Student-Athlete Award winners. The award is named for Willis R. Kelly who was the Athletic Director at the University of Minnesota-Morris.

3.3.5.3 The NSIC Subcommittee, empowered by the Conference Council to make the NSIC award selections, shall be made up of the Faculty Athletic Representatives Council.

3.3.5.4 The committee shall select one recipient for each award. There shall not be co-recipients.

3.3.5.5 Timeline.

3.3.5.5.1 By March 10, the conference office initiates the process by emailing FARs the forms for nominating individuals.

3.3.5.5.2 By April 1, FARs will submit to the conference office the nominations.

3.3.5.5.3 Within five business days of April 1, the conference office will send out the nominations to the FARs.

3.3.5.5.4 On April 13, the conference office will send a reminder to those FARs who have not sent in their votes.

3.3.5.5.5 By April 15, FARs will submit their vote electronically to the conference office.

3.3.5.5.6 Within two business days, the conference office will send the results to the FARs and others.

3.3.5.6 Processes.

3.3.5.6.1 The FAR may not vote for a student-athlete from their own institution.

3.3.5.6.2 FARs will vote electronically for three candidates for each award. These will be numbered 1 for top choice, 2 for second choice and 3 for third choice. No ties are allowed.

3.3.5.6.3 Conference office will convert the votes from a 1, 2, 3 ranking to a 3, 2, 1 ranking. The votes will then be tallied.

3.3.5.6.4 The student-athlete with the highest total will be the award winner.

3.3.5.6.5 If there is a tie for top spot, the student-athletes (in the tie) with the most number of 3's after conversion will be the award winner. If a tie still exists, the FARs will

- vote again only for those student-athletes in the tied position. Voting will be concluded within one week.
- 3.3.5.7** The Britton Award for Academic Excellence and the Kelly Award for Academic Excellence includes an appropriate plaques (one for school and one for award winner).
- 3.3.5.8** The minimum qualifications for these awards are:
- 3.3.5.8.1** Minimum GPA of 3.5 in undergraduate at the NSIC institution through the most recent academic period, and 3.75 graduate GPA. If graduate, must include both graduate and undergraduate GPA. The student must have at least completed their academic junior year, at the end of the spring term as required by the member institution. *(Revised: 7/12/2023)*
 - 3.3.5.8.2** Transfer students must have completed at least one year at the NSIC institution.
 - 3.3.5.8.3** Evidence of academic excellence beyond the GPA (scholarships, prizes and recognition).
 - 3.3.5.8.4** Evidence of participation in the life of the institution (all post-secondary schools attended) other than athletics.
 - 3.3.5.8.5** Evidence of athletic performance.
 - 3.3.5.8.6** Participation in at least 2/3 of the varsity events of the student's primary sport in the previous season, whether or not that season is completed.
 - 3.3.5.8.7** Other evidence that might support the nomination (active in the life of the non-university community, etc.).
- 3.3.5.9** In the selection process, more weight will be given to academic performance (60%) than to the other combined criteria (40%); athletic accomplishments to be given no more than 20% of the weight.
- 3.3.5.10** The award can only be won one time in a student-athlete's career.

- 3.3.6 NSIC/Myles Brand All-Academic with Distinction Award.** The NSIC/Myles Brand All-Academic with Distinction Award ~~is an undergraduate award that is~~ will be awarded to academic senior student-athletes. They must have a cumulative ~~undergraduate~~ GPA of 3.75 or higher at the point of nomination. Award recipients will receive a certificate and a watch from the NSIC. The award will be presented annually each spring (including associate members). A student-athlete can only receive the Myles Brand Award once in their career. *(Revised: 7/12/2023)*
- 3.3.6.1** Academically the student-athlete must have completed at least one full academic year ~~of undergraduate work~~ at their current institution (student must be in at least their 3rd academic-year-semester at their institution). *(Adopted: 7/12/2023)*
 - 3.3.6.2** Athletically the student-athlete is in at least their second year of competition at their current institution. *(Adopted: 7/12/2023)*

3.3.7 NSIC Elite 18 Award. The NSIC Elite 18 Award recognizes outstanding student-athletes in the conference. These student-athletes have achieved at the championship level in the classroom and in their sport. The NSIC Elite 18 Award is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade point average in each sponsored sport according to the following criteria. *Note: The award description will be automatically updated in the NSIC Operational Standards for the Conduct of Sports to reflect any changes to the number of sports sponsored by the conference.*

3.3.7.1 Selection Criteria.

- 3.3.7.1.1** Academically the student-athlete ~~has achieved at least sophomore status as defined by their own institution.~~ must have completed at least one full academic year at their current institution (student must be in at least their 3rd academic-year-semester at their institution).
- 3.3.7.1.2** Athletically the student-athlete is in their second year of competition at their current institution.
- 3.3.7.1.3** Athletically the student-athlete is an active member on the roster and a member of the designated squad size for the sport at the championship site.
- 3.3.7.1.4** A student-athlete may win the award only once per academic year even if they participate in more than one sport.
- 3.3.7.1.5** Grade point average is based on the cumulative undergraduate grade point average at the time of nomination as calculated by each institution. Grade point average calculations will be based on a 4.00 scale and will be reported to two decimal places. Graduate-students are eligible, based on their undergraduate GPA.
- 3.3.7.1.6** In the event of a tie based on grade point average, the award is presented to the student-athlete with the highest total number of undergraduate credit hours earned as calculated by each institution. *(Revised: 7/15/21)*
- 3.3.7.1.7** If a tie still exists after looking at the total number of credit hours earned, all student-athletes who are tied shall be presented with the NSIC Elite 18 Award.
- 3.3.7.2** The following table indicates who is eligible for the NSIC Elite 18 Award. For team-oriented sports, student-athletes who are an active member on the roster and a member of the designated squad size for the sport at the conference championship site will be eligible for the award. For individual sports, student-athletes who participate at the conference meet will be eligible for the award. For football, student-athletes who are members of the North Division Champion team(s), the South Division Champion team(s) and Overall Conference Championship team(s) are eligible. For wrestling, student-athletes who are members of the Overall Conference Championship team(s) and those named to first or second team all-conference are eligible. Each institution is limited to one nomination per sport. Affiliate members are eligible for the NSIC Elite 18 Award.

Note: The selection criteria will be automatically updated in the NSIC Operational Standards for the Conduct of Sports to reflect any changes to the championship formats.

Fall Sports	NSIC Finals Site Format	NSIC Elite 18 Award Eligibility
(M) Cross Country	Conference Meet (15 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
(W) Cross Country	Conference Meet (16 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
Football	North Champion(s), South Champion(s), Overall champion(s)	Only participants on north/south division and overall conference championship team(s) eligible
(W) Soccer	Conference Tournament (4 teams)	Only participants on four teams at conference tournament finals site eligible
Volleyball	Conference Tournament (4 teams)	Only participants on four teams at conference tournament finals site eligible
Winter Sports	NSIC Finals Site Format	NSIC Elite 18 Award Eligibility
(M) Basketball	Conference Tournament (8 teams)	Only participants on eight teams at conference tournament finals site eligible
(W) Basketball	Conference Tournament (8 teams)	Only participants on eight teams at conference tournament finals site eligible
(W) Swimming & Diving	Conference Meet (10 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
(M) Indoor T&F	Conference Meet (13 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
(W) Indoor T&F	Conference Meet (16 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
Wrestling	Overall champion(s)	Only participants on the overall conference championship team(s) and individuals named as first or second team all-conference eligible
Spring Sports	NSIC Finals Site Format	NSIC Elite 18 Award Eligibility
Baseball	Conference Tournament (8 teams)	All participants at conference tournament eligible
Softball	Conference Tournament (10 teams)	All participants at conference tournament eligible
(W) Tennis	Conference Tournament (6 teams)	All participants at conference tournament eligible
(M) Outdoor T&F	Conference Meet (13 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
(W) Outdoor T&F	Conference Meet (16 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
(M) Golf	Conference Meet (11 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible
(W) Golf	Conference Meet (14 teams)	All participants at conference meet eligible

3.3.8 All-Academic Team of Excellence and All-Academic Team.

3.3.8.1 An All-Academic Team of Excellence, along with an All-Academic Team will be recognized in each conference sponsored sport with the size of the team to be unlimited.

3.3.8.2 Criteria. The following criteria shall be used:

3.3.8.2.1 The student-athlete must be a member of the varsity ~~traveling~~ team roster.

3.3.8.2.2 To be named to the All-Academic Team of Excellence, student-athletes must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.60 or higher (4.0 scale).

3.3.8.2.3 To be named to the All-Academic Team, the student-athlete must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.20-3.59 (4.0 scale).

3.3.8.2.4 Academically the student-athlete must have completed at least one full academic year at their current institution (student must be in at least their 3rd academic-year-semester at their institution). *(Revised: 7/15/21)*

3.3.8.2.5 Athletically the student-athlete is in at least their second year of competition at their current institution (true freshman, red-shirt freshmen and ineligible athletic transfers are not eligible). *(Revised: 7/15/21)*

3.3.8.2.6 Graduate students are eligible. Their cumulative undergraduate GPA must meet criteria. Their nomination is based upon cumulative graduate GPA at that institution if they have earned at least 8 graduate credits, otherwise their cumulative undergraduate GPA will be used. Must be in at least their second season of NSIC competition. *(Adopted: 7/15/21)*

3.3.8.3 The Assistant Commissioner for Media Relations shall send a form to each CSC requesting the names of qualifying student-athletes for each of the all-academic teams from the current sports season on October 1, January 15 and April 1 of each year.

3.3.8.4 The CSCs shall send a list of qualifiers to the Assistant Commissioner.

3.3.8.5 The teams shall be announced 2-4 weeks after the conclusion of the NSIC season for each sport.

3.3.8.6 All members of the men's and women's NSIC All-Academic Teams shall receive a merit certificate. The conference office shall send out the certificates.