

CONSTITUTION

Article 1 — Name

- 1.1. Organization Name** - The name of this organization shall be the Southern States Athletic Conference—hereafter referred to as the SSAC.

Article 2 — Mission

- 2.1. Mission** – The mission of the SSAC is to promote the development of athletics as an integral component of the educational offerings of its member institutions by means of democratic participation at the conference level. This aim shall be accomplished by representatives of those institutions that subscribe to and support athletic programs and shall culminate in conference championship competition. The SSAC seeks membership only from accredited institutions that support this aim. The primary criteria for selection and encouragement of membership shall be of an educational emphasis.

2.2. Goals for SSAC Member Institutions

- 2.2. A. Ensure that intercollegiate athletics is an integral part of the complete educational offering, under the control of those responsible for the administration of the institution.
- 2.2. B. Maintain high ethical standards through the commitment to the principle of self-reporting.
- 2.2. C. Evaluate the athletics program in terms of the educational purpose of the institution.
- 2.2. D. Engage in competition with other institutions having similar athletic and academic philosophies and policies while respecting the diversity that can exist in a conference setting and among its member institutions.
- 2.2. E. Membership - To further strengthen the SSAC brand and fortify the allegiance of current member institutions, to recruit quality prospective members while maintaining geographic balance and compatibility.
- 2.2. F. Governance - Provide structure, policies and procedural guidance for members identifying best practices and promoting ethical behavior and professionalism.
- 2.2. G. Student-Athlete Experience and Academic Achievement – SSAC members and student-athletes strive to achieve excellence in both academic and athletic pursuits while maintaining the appropriate balance between academic and athletic endeavors. Resulting in SSAC student-athlete graduates being better prepared to be servant-leaders in their communities.
- 2.2. H. Competitiveness - SSAC members are recognized as being among the nation’s best, most fierce and well-respected competitors.

- 2.3. Mission Statement** – The SSAC promotes member institutions’ athletic and academic programs at the local, regional, and national levels, providing student-athletes enhanced educational and athletic collegiate experiences.

This is accomplished by:

- 1. Being a visible conference that promotes a tradition that is viewed as strong, stable, and growing.
- 2. Stressing academic quality and integrity of our members and student-athletes and awarding those who are outstanding.
- 3. Being nationally competitive in conference-sponsored sports.
- 4. Promoting members to be leaders in the NAIA Champions of Character initiative.
- 5. Being a leader within the NAIA on national issues that affect member institutions, their athletic programs, and the student-athletes who participate in them.
- 6. Allowing student-athletes to receive quality education through the assistance of intercollegiate athletics.
- 7. Maximize the use of user-friendly athletic websites, video streaming of athletic events, updating data base information and use of social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.
- 8. Strategically grow and align SSAC sport sponsorships with the NAIA championships
- 9. Develop travel partners based on geographic proximity to allow divisional play opportunities and to minimize travel costs and missed class time.

10. Participate actively in local community events; volunteer for assignments in conference committees, raters, oversight, sport chairs, eligibility review committees, champion of character committees, etc.
11. Provide support of coaches and staff of proven character. Provide opportunities for rules education sessions. Provide oversight for eligibility certification and requests for exception. Provide properly trained support staff at athletic events.
12. Adhere to conference and NAIA fiscal reporting guidelines. Monitor members' athletic budgets to ensure competitive balance and growth.
13. Increase communication between Presidents and Athletic Directors with in-person and conference call meetings on conference membership and policy decisions.
14. Promote academic achievement through a vigorous awards and recognitions program and encourage member institutions to recognize momentous academic achievement.
15. Build competition schedules using travel partners and divisional play where appropriate.
16. Promote active participation by members and student-athletes in webinars and on-line sessions. Conduct and share the wide variety of effective, on-campus Champion of Character events.
17. Use public address announcements at SSAC athletic events to emphasize our priority on character and sportsmanship. Conduct risk management audits on our athletic facilities.
18. Use our conference successes, reputation and traditions to garner financial support from corporate entities.
29. Encourage members to provide the maximum scholarships allowable under NAIA guidelines while maintaining appropriate institutional financial oversight.
20. Use automatic bids strategically to advance the best SSAC teams to the NAIA championships.
21. Nominate and promote, student-athletes, member institutions and the SSAC for both academic and athletic achievement.

Article 3 — Conference Law

- 3.1. Conference Code** - The SSAC shall be governed by a Code consisting of three (3) parts: namely, the *Constitution, Policy and Procedures* and the *Sport Operations and Championships Manual*. To the extent that any part may conflict with the *Constitution*, statutes of the *Constitution* shall prevail.
- 3.2. Conference Name Change** - The SSAC was incorporated under the name Georgia Alabama Carolina Conference, Inc. on the 16th day of March, 1999 and renamed the Southern States Athletic Conference, Inc. on the 27th day of June, 2005. All other provisions of the Articles of Incorporation for the Georgia Alabama Carolina Conference, Inc. (now the Southern States Athletic Conference, Inc.) remain in effect.
- 3.3. Purpose** - The SSAC is organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes with the goal of fostering amateur sports competition under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
- 3.4. Dissolution of Conference** - Upon the dissolution of the Southern States Athletic Conference, Inc., the Board of Presidents, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the conference, shall distribute the assets for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the SSAC is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Article 4 — Membership

- 4.1. Current Membership**
 - 4.1. A. The members of this athletic conference are four-year colleges and universities in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi.
 - 4.1. B. A new active member shall be added to the subsequent roster of members. The current members of the SSAC consist of the following institutions:

Blue Mountain College
Brewton-Parker College
Dalton State College
Faulkner University
Talladega College
Life University

Loyola University New Orleans
Middle Georgia State University
University of Mobile
Stillman College
William Carey University

4.2. Guidelines for Membership

- 4.2. A. Must offer a minimum of four years of academic work and award the bachelor's degree.
- 4.2. B. Must be active members of the NAIA and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC).
- 4.2. C. New membership applications are to be reviewed by the SSAC Membership Committee.
- 4.2. D. New membership applications must be filed with the Commissioner and Chair of the Board of Presidents no later than 90 days prior to the annual meeting of the Board of Presidents.
- 4.2. E. Must receive an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the active full member institutions.

4.3. Sport Sponsorship Requirements for Active Membership

- 4.3. A. An active member institution shall sponsor at least four (4) core sports and at least six (6) SSAC sponsored sports. For institutions that are single sex institutions, those active member institutions should sponsor three core sports and at least four (4) SSAC sponsored sports total. The common core is defined as baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, softball and volleyball. In addition, it is permissible to count cross country and track & field as a one core sport. For cross country, an institution must participate in a minimum of five meets with at least seven student-athletes participating in each countable meet. Other sport student-athletes cannot be used to meet the required minimum number of runners. If inclement weather causes a scheduled event to be cancelled, the event will count toward satisfying the requirement of participation in five events. Track & field must also have five spring outdoor events and have a minimum of 12 student-athletes participating in each countable meet. A minimum of 10 student-athletes must be track & field specific (not a member of any other sports team). The team must participate in a minimum of 12 events per meet, with at least four being field events. The sport of football, although not currently a SSAC sponsored sport, can be used to satisfy the core sport requirement.
- 4.3. B. Each member institution shall sponsor at least one SSAC sponsored sport in each of the three seasons of competition.
- 4.3. C. Member institutions should declare any new core sport sponsorships no later than August 1 of the year preceding the academic year the institution is requesting to compete. Member institutions shall declare any other sport sponsorship no later than April 1 of the year proceeding the academic year the institution is requesting to compete. A sport is considered a sponsored sport when at least five (5) member institutions sponsor the sport—per NAIA sponsorship rules—unless special consideration is given by the Board of Presidents.
- 4.3. D. In cases of unusual circumstances, an appeal may be made to the Commissioner for review by the Board of Presidents.
- 4.3. E. Active member institutions eliminating conference-sponsored sports shall notify other active members of the Board of Presidents, by way of the Commissioner, of their intentions by April 1 of the year proceeding the academic year the institution is eliminating said conference sports.
- 4.3. F. If not eligible to compete in NAIA championships and/or eligible for automatic qualification into NAIA championships, participation in postseason conference championships is prohibited.

4.4. Membership Categories

- 4.4. A. **Full Membership:** Institutions that are meeting the guidelines listed, have been approved for membership by the Board of Presidents, and are in good standing. Good standing includes but is not limited to: compliance with the constitution and bylaws of the SSAC and the NAIA and maintenance of postseason eligibility.
- 4.4. B. **Associate Membership:** Institutions that do not meet the membership criteria as outlined may belong to the conference as an associate member for individual sports by affirmative vote of the Board of Presidents by a favorable two-thirds vote of the active full member institutions. An associate member shall vote only on sport-specific issues in those sports in which it has been approved for associate membership and is required to follow the applicable rules and regulations of the SSAC for that sport. Associate members are eligible to compete in postseason conference

championships. Associate membership fees are as follows: \$500 per sport in cross country and competitive cheer & dance; \$1,000 per sport in track & field, golf and tennis; \$2,000 per sport in soccer, volleyball, baseball and softball and \$5,000 per sport in basketball. Also, the commissioner can negotiate a multi-sport discount for two or more sports from the same school.

- 4.4. C. **Provisional Membership:** Institutions that do not fulfill the membership criteria outlined in Articles 4.2 and 4.3 may belong to the conference as a provisional member by an affirmative vote of the Board of Presidents by a favorable two-thirds vote of the active full member institutions. A provisional member is provided a conference schedule of competition, but is not an active voting member of the conference. Provisional members are eligible for athletic achievement awards, conference academic awards and conference championships and can receive the conference's automatic bid for postseason competition if eligible by NAIA rules and regulations. This provisional status can last a maximum of two years beginning on the provisional member's effective date. It is possible to extend this provisional membership for a maximum of two additional years, provided the following conditions are met: an institution must make continuous improvement toward sport sponsorships, increasing team roster sizes, increasing scholarship support, increasing staffing and upgrading or building new facilities. The Commissioner would evaluate the annual progress at the end of each academic year and offer a continuous improvement status report during each of the four years. At any time during its provisional years, when the institution's progress meets the active membership requirements, full membership status can be granted. Full membership status can only be achieved after fulfilling the requirements for active membership and receiving a favorable two-thirds vote of the active full member institutions. After four years, provisional members with unacceptable progress would be ineligible to participate in postseason conference championships or to receive the conference's automatic bid for NAIA postseason competition.

4.5. Withdrawal of Membership

- 4.5. A. An active member institution may withdraw from the conference by filing an official notice of withdrawal with the Chair of the Board of Presidents and the Commissioner, no later than June 30 of the year prior to the academic year it requests membership withdrawal.
- 4.5. B. In the event a member is withdrawing, the Commissioner shall immediately notify the president of each active member institution and the withdrawal shall become effective.
- 4.5. C. A withdrawing member shall comply with all conference regulations, including the payment of assessments until the effective withdrawal date.
- 4.5. E. A withdrawing member shall not be entitled to any rebate, funds apportionment and/or other accumulated assets of the conference.
- 4.5. F. A withdrawing member shall be obligated to play all approved athletic competitions within the conference in accordance with governing contracts for a period of one year following the announcement of its withdrawal, unless such competitions are waived or modified by written consent of the parties affected.

4.6. Expulsion, Suspension and Probation

- 4.6. A. By an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of all active full members of the conference—except the offending active full member—and subject to the provisions of the *Constitution*, the conference, through action of the Board of Presidents, may impose expulsion, suspension or probation on an active full member for violation of the provisions of the *Constitution*.
- 4.6. B. Expulsion means complete severance from the conference in all sports.
- 4.6. C. Suspension means a temporary severance from the conference in one or more sports.
- 4.6. D. Probation means temporary affiliate membership for a specified period, during which time the active full member must institute and demonstrate corrective measures to insure conformity to the *Constitution*.

4.7. Changes in Membership – If a member institution has a change of membership status (not-for-profit, for-profit, change in accreditation status) the President of the institution will formally notify the Commissioner of the change in writing, requesting conference status (eligible for conference championships and/or NAIA postseason competition, etc.) with their rationale. The Commissioner will present the request to the conference Board of Presidents, who will make the final determination of the institution's status. The decision of the Board of Presidents must be consistent with NAIA action toward said institution.

4.8. Reinstatement of Members - By an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of all active full members of the conference in good standing, a member institution that has withdrawn or has been expelled, suspended or placed on probation may be restored to full membership through action of the Board of Presidents.

4.9 Finances and Dues

- 4.9. A. Dues shall be determined by the Board of Presidents and any increase shall not become effective until after July 1.
- 4.9. B. The non-refundable application fee for membership in the SSAC shall be \$1,000, plus membership committee travel expenses. All new members will also be required to pay \$5,000 to the SSAC cash reserve.
- 4.9. C. The annual dues are payable on or before August 1. Any member failing to pay its dues at the stipulated time, after due notice is given, is automatically suspended and shall have no voice in the meetings of this conference, until its dues are paid. Exception: If a school has extenuating circumstances, they may request in writing an extended period for payments of dues, with a financial penalty to be incurred at the discretion of the Commissioner.
- 4.9. D. Members added to the conference membership as Associate and Provisional members (see 4.4.B. and 4.4.C.) will be subject to application fees and contributions to the SSAC cash reserve.
- 4.9. E. Members wishing to leave SSAC membership should give notice to the Commissioner Board of Presidents' Chair by June 30 of their last year in the league. Prior to withdrawing from SSAC membership, said member will be required to pay one year's membership dues to the SSAC cash reserve for the first year they are no longer in the league.
- 4.9. F. A fee of \$2,000 shall be assessed for reinstatement of an institution whose membership has been revoked or an institution that has withdrawn previously from the SSAC. Reinstated members will also be required by the Board of Presidents to pay \$5,000 to the SSAC cash reserve.

4.10 Commissioner's Cup

- 4.10. A. The SSAC Commissioner's Cup shall be awarded based on the cumulative performance of each member school in the league's 18 sports for men and women. The scoring formula will evaluate the percentage of potential points earned by each member institution in the conference sports it sponsors. Three points will be awarded per institution sponsoring the sport, with the regular-season champion (where applicable) or tournament champion (if no regular-season champion is determined) receiving the maximum number of points and the rest of the sponsoring institutions receiving a decreasing number of points (by multiples of three). After percentages are calculated, bonus points will be awarded for tournament championships (if the regular-season champion is utilized in the formula) and for sports sponsored beyond the minimum threshold in the SSAC Constitution (6 sports, 4 sports for single-gender institutions). Men's and Women's Sports Commissioner's Cups will also be awarded using the same formula, with bonus points being awarded for tournament championships (if the regular-season champion is utilized in the formula) and for sports sponsored beyond one half of the minimum threshold in the SSAC Constitution (3 sports).

Article 5 — Officers and Agents

5.1. General

- 5.1. A. The officers of the SSAC shall be a Chair and Vice Chair. These officers shall be elected by the Board of Presidents and shall serve as officers of the members and the Board of Presidents. To be eligible for election as an officer, an individual must be a member of the Board of Presidents.
- 5.1. B. These officers shall be elected biannually by the Board of Presidents at its annual meeting, held in the spring, and shall hold office beginning after the close of the annual spring meeting and serve a two-year term until the close of the annual spring meeting, or until their successors are elected.

5.2 Duties of the Chair

- 5.2. A. Shall preside at the general meetings of the members and the Board of Directors, and shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee.
- 5.2. B. Shall be the chief officer in directing the general policy of the conference, shall preside at the Board of Presidents meetings, shall appoint the members of the conference appointive committees, and shall have and exercise such powers and duties as in corporate management usually devolved

upon the Chair, and perform such functions as may be delegated to him/her by the Board of Presidents.

- 5.2. C. May act as the official spokesperson for the conference, it being understood that on most matters the Commissioner will perform this function.

5.3. Duties of Vice Chair

- 5.3. A. Shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed for him/her by the Board of Presidents and may be delegated to him/her by the Chair.
- 5.3. B. In the absence or inability of the Chair, or in the case of his/her death, resignation, or removal from office, the powers and duties of the Chair shall devolve upon the Vice Chair, and the Vice Chair shall exercise all powers and duties of the Chair during such absence or disability.

5.4. Removal of Officers - Any and all officers of the SSAC may be removed at any time by action of two-thirds majority of the members of the Board of Presidents at any regular or special meeting.

5.5. Agents or Employees. All agents and employees of the SSAC other than the elective officers shall be appointed and their salaries or other compensation fixed, by the Board of Presidents, except to such extent as the Board may have delegated such authority to a committee, officer, the Commissioner, or other agent designated by the Board.

Article 6 — Organizational Structure

6.1. General - The organizational structure will be composed of a Board of Presidents, Executive Committee, Board of Athletic Directors, and a Commissioner.

6.2. Board of Presidents

- 6.2. A. The membership of the Board of Presidents shall consist of the CEO of each member institution.
- 6.2. B. The Board of Presidents shall meet in-person a minimum of once a year, though biannual meetings are encouraged.
- 6.2. C. For the transaction of business, a quorum shall consist of at least two-thirds of the membership of the Board of Presidents.
- 6.2. D. Robert's Rules of Order will govern meetings with a simple majority carrying voting decisions, except as otherwise noted in the *Constitution*.

6.3. Powers and Duties of the Board of Presidents

- 6.3. A. Review, revise, approve or disapprove any action(s) or recommendation(s) taken by the Executive Committee as well as all recommendations submitted by the appropriate committees through the Board of Athletic Directors (Membership and Ethics). Actions taken by the Board of Presidents shall become effective immediately, unless otherwise specified. Disapproval of the Executive Committee's action(s) shall not be retroactive.
- 6.3. B. Initiate, determine or repeal any legislation, policy or activity of or pertaining to the conference.
- 6.3. C. Make decisions on membership and withdrawal of membership, or denial of specific sports sponsorship for a member institution.
- 6.3. D. Appoint committees for any designed purpose(s).
- 6.3. E. The Board shall elect Chairs from among its membership for the Membership and Ethics Committees. These appointments shall be made on an annual basis.
- 6.3. F. Employ a Conference Commissioner and prescribe his/her duties and the terms and conditions of his/her employment.
- 6.3. G. Adopt an annual budget for the following fiscal year (July 1-June 30) and levy assessments (dues) upon members.
- 6.3. H. The enumeration of the above responsibilities and duties shall not be construed to deny the right of the Board of Presidents to exercise any other power or to perform any duty within the field of governance of the affairs of the conference.

6.4. Executive Committee

- 6.4. A. Shall be composed of six members; the voting members will be the four officers of the Board of Presidents composed of the Chair, the immediate Past-Chair, the Vice Chair, and an At-Large member as elected by the Board of Presidents. The other two members are ex-officio and are the Chair of the Board of Athletic Directors and the Commissioner.
- 6.4. B. In the event a member of the Executive Committee cannot attend a meeting or must be excused due to a conflict of interest, the Chair shall select another active member institution's president to serve as a temporary substitute.

- 6.4. C. No vote may be cast by proxy.
- 6.4. D. The presence of all, or the presence of all but one, of the membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum. A quorum being present, action may be taken by the majority.

6.5. Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee

- 6.5. A. Make interim decisions and institute immediate action in emergency situations that involve the best interests of the conference, an active member institution or a student-athlete. The Commissioner shall report the Executive Committee's actions to each active member of the Board of Presidents within ten days in digest form unless copies of the official minutes are available within that time period.
- 6.5. B. Shall have the full power and authority of the Board of Presidents in intervals between Board meetings insofar as the affairs of the SSAC are generally concerned, except insofar as such power and authority may have been specifically limited by the Board of the Presidents.
- 6.5. C. Resolve administrative questions relative to the immediate operation of the conference athletic program whenever such questions cannot be resolved by the Commissioner.
- 6.5. D. Recommend to the Board of Presidents, after due deliberation, any legislation, eligibility rules, regulations or policies that may be deemed advisable.
- 6.5. E. Adjudicate appeals filed following any ruling(s) imposed by the Commissioner and to approve or revoke such ruling. In the event of a tie vote, the ruling(s) of the Commissioner shall be final.
- 6.5. F. Review the conference's fiscal year budget and make recommendations to the Board of Presidents regarding approval or revision.
- 6.5. G. Audit, if deemed necessary, the annual financial report of the conference.
- 6.5. H. Enact NAIA legislation on behalf of the conference.

6.6. Board of Athletic Directors

- 6.6. A. The membership of the SSAC Board of Athletic Directors shall consist of the Athletic Director of each member institution.
- 6.6. B. The membership of the Board of Athletic Directors shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair. The term of election should be four years; two years as Vice Chair and two years as Chair.
- 6.6. C. The committee has four ex-officio members: SSAC Commissioner, SSAC Eligibility Chair, SSAC Sports Information Director and SSAC Faculty Athletic Representative.
- 6.6. D. The Board of Athletic Directors must meet a minimum of twice annually. One meeting must be in conjunction with the conference's Annual Spring Meeting (SSAC Jamboree).
- 6.6. E. For the transaction of business, a quorum shall consist of at least two-thirds of the membership.
- 6.6. F. Robert's Rules of Order will govern meetings with a simple majority carrying voting decisions.

6.7. Responsibilities of the Board of Athletic Directors

- 6.7. A. Reviewing operational policies for approval by the Board, or referral to the Board of Presidents, that were developed by any of the committees.
- 6.7. B. Acting as the communications link between the committees and the Board of Presidents.
- 6.7. C. Soliciting nominations and recommending members to the Membership, Eligibility, and Ethics Committees, as well as representatives to the Regional Coordinating Committee. (Chairs of the Membership and Ethics Committees are elected by the Board of Presidents)
- 6.7. D. Recommending operational policies for conference competition and championships.
- 6.7. E. Establishing a location and setting the agenda for the Annual Spring Meeting (SSAC Jamboree).
- 6.7. F. Legislation initiated by the Board of Athletic Directors for the *Operations and Championships Manual*, may be presented for discussion and a vote taken; however all proposed alterations by the Board of Athletic Directors to any part of the Code can only be executed by the Board of Presidents.
- 6.7. G. The Board of Presidents and Executive Committee has the power and authority to disapprove any action(s) or recommendation(s) taken by the Board of Athletic Directors with respect to the *Operations and Championships Manual*.

6.8. Duties and Responsibilities of the Commissioner

- 6.8. A. The commissioner shall be the chief administrative officer of the conference.
- 6.8. B. Provide educational and public leadership.
- 6.8. C. Make inspections and investigations at active member institutions as he/she deems necessary.
- 6.8. D. Have control of selection, training, observing, grading, assigning and dismissing officials in the conference's core sports.

- 6.8. E. Shall select support staff for the operation of the conference. These include a Sports Information Director, Eligibility Chair, and other staff as authorized by the Executive Committee.
- 6.8. F. The commissioner oversees the financial transactions of the conference, and as such he/she shall be responsible for the security, disbursement and recording of conference funds and properties—records shall be open for inspection by official conference representatives—and prepare the fiscal and property affairs of the conference for an annual audit if deemed necessary by the Board of Presidents.
- 6.8. G. Serve as consultant and lead administrator in the organization and administration of conference championships; also, determine a champion, co-champions or no champion in the event a conference championship is terminated before finalization.
- 6.8. H. Attend any meetings of reputable and recognized groups concerned with intercollegiate, amateur and affiliated athletics.
- 6.8. I. Review records relative to compliance with SSAC/NAIA rules and regulations as deemed necessary.
- 6.8. J. Make an annual financial report to the Board of Presidents at its annual meeting.
- 6.8. K. Prepare and submit to the Executive Committee a tentative annual budget.
- 6.8. L. Serve as a spokesperson for the conference, unless the chairperson of the Board of Presidents performs this function.
- 6.8. M. Exercise such powers and authority as may be reasonably necessary to the discharge of the duties and responsibilities of his/her office, including the right to disqualify coaches and players in emergency situations of serious concern to the conference.
- 6.8. N. Serve as an ex officio active member, without vote, of the Board of Presidents, Executive Committee, Board of Athletic Directors, and Eligibility Committee and ad hoc committees unless the appointing authority states otherwise.
- 6.8. O. Serve as an active member of the Ethics Committee and the Membership Committee.
- 6.8. P. Serve as the official delegate of the conference to the NAIA Convention and as the acting member of the NAIA Conference Commissioners Association.
- 6.8. Q. The commissioner shall serve as the principal enforcement and interpreting officer of the SSAC.

Article 7 — Other Acting Committees

7.1. Establishment of Committees

- 7.1. A. The Board of Presidents may designate such other committees as it may deem desirable, the members of which need not necessarily be members of the Board.
- 7.1. B. Committees: Membership Committee, Ethics Committee, Champions of Character Committee, Competition Committee, Eligibility Committee, Faculty Athletic Representative Committee and Sport Committees, including the Trainers Committee and the Sports Information Directors Committee.
- 7.1. C. These Committee members are selected by a recommendation from the Board of Athletic Directors followed by the approval of the Board of Presidents.

7.2. Membership Committee

- 7.2. A. The Membership Committee shall consist of a Chair and five additional members. The Chair shall be the CEO of a member institution. The five additional members shall include at least two athletic directors, faculty athletics representatives and the Commissioner.
- 7.2. B. The committee shall review as needed and make appropriate recommendations.
- 7.2. C. Receives and reviews applications for membership from other institutions.
- 7.2. D. Follow established criteria and procedures for admission into the conference.
- 7.2. E. Making on-campus evaluations of applicants as deemed necessary.
- 7.2. F. The Membership Committee shall refer recommendations for membership to the Board of Athletic Directors for review. The Board of Athletic Directors will send its recommendations on to the Board of Presidents, who will act upon these recommendations.

7.3. Conduct and Ethics Committee

- 7.3. A. Shall consist of a Chair and four additional members with the Chair being the Eligibility Chair of the conference. The five members shall include two athletic directors, a coach and the Commissioner.
- 7.3. B. This Committee can also serve as an advisory council on issues related to inappropriate conduct of a physical or verbal nature by a player, coach, or fan; violations involving financial aid, recruiting,

frequency of play, and scheduling; violations involving providing false or inaccurate information to the SSAC or a member institution by a player or coach; hearing and handling grievances of member institutions; and sanctions related to conduct in competition.

- 7.3. C. Proposals and recommendations from the Ethics Committee can be acted upon by the Commissioner or forwarded by the Commissioner to the Executive Committee for its review and action.

7.4. Champions of Character Committee

- 7.4. A. The committee will consist of each member institution's Champions of Character representative to the NAIA with a Chair elected by the committee.
- 7.4. B. The Committee shall meet at least once a year to conduct business, develop procedures and discuss methods for promoting the fundamental core values of the Champion of Character through the SSAC and its member institutions. This committee is the primary group responsible for initiating NAIA Champions of Character programs at the conference level.

7.5 Competition Committee

- 7.5. A. The committee shall consist of four voting members of the Board of Athletic Directors.
- 7.5. B. The committee's responsibilities include recommending the scope of the SSAC's activities related to event management, hospitality, and competition administration and logistics.
- 7.5. C. Meetings will be held at the request of the Chair of the Board of Athletic Directors and/or the Commissioner.
- 7.5. D. All recommendations from the Competition Committee shall be submitted to the Board of Athletic Directors for their review and referral to the Board of Presidents for final action.

7.6. Eligibility Committee

- 7.6. A. Shall consist of a Chair and three other members. The Chair shall hold the position of athletic director or faculty athletics representative. The three additional members shall include an athletic director, faculty athletics representative and Registrar.
- 7.6. B. The Chair shall be responsible for the accumulation and evaluation of all NAIA eligibility forms.
- 7.6. C. The Committee shall meet at least once a year to transact business.
- 7.6. D. Act as the interpreting body of the eligibility rules of the NAIA and SSAC.
- 7.6. E. Process eligibility infractions to the NAIA Eligibility Committee.
- 7.6. F. Responsible for informing members of the changes in NAIA and SSAC eligibility requirements.
- 7.6. G. Recommend such changes in the SSAC eligibility standards or policies as it feels are in the best interest of the conference.
- 7.6. H. All proposals and recommendations from the Eligibility Committee shall be submitted to the Board of Athletic Directors or to the Commissioner for their review and referral to the Board of Presidents for final action.

7.7 Faculty Athletics Representative Committee

- 7.7. A. The committee will consist of each member institution's Faculty Athletic Representative with a Chair elected by the committee.
- 7.7. B. The committee's responsibilities include recommending the scope of the SSAC's activities regarding issues related to student-athlete welfare; academic issues as they relate to SSAC athletic activities, processes, and procedures; eligibility rules education, and formulation of proposals for changes to eligibility rules.
- 7.7. C. Meetings will be held at the request of the Chair of the Board of Athletic Directors and/or the Commissioner.
- 7.7. D. All proposals and recommendations from the Faculty Athletics Representative Committee shall be submitted to the Board of Athletic Directors or the Commissioner for their review and referral to the Board of Presidents for final action.

Article 8 — Eligibility and Financial Aid Rules and Requirements

- 8.1 **NAIA and SSAC alignment:** The SSAC Eligibility and Financial Aid Rules and Requirements do not negate the requirements outlined in the most current version of the NAIA Official Handbook; however, in some instances, the SSAC Rules and Requirements may be more restrictive than those outlined by the NAIA. Eligibility (Article V) and financial aid requirements (Article II, Section B), as stated in the NAIA Official Handbook, will be recognized by all

member institutions. Further requirements recommended by Conference Committees and approved by the Board of Presidents will also be mandated.

- 8.2. Within conference transfers:** Any student who has ever participated in any varsity intercollegiate (as defined by the NAIA) athletic contest at one SSAC institution (institution A) and remained identified at that institution may immediately participate in that sport at a second SSAC institution (institution B) if a written release is provided by the athletic director or compliance officer of institution A and the student has a 2.0 cumulative GPA. If a written release is not provided, the student-athlete will not be eligible to participate in that sport for one calendar year from the date they identify with institution B.

A student who signs an athletic aid agreement to participate in a given sport at an SSAC member institution, but does not participate (does not attend the institution or attends the institution, but does not participate in a varsity contest in that sport as outlined above) cannot participate with any other conference institution in that sport for one calendar year from the date of enrollment at the second institution. A written release may be granted by the athletic director or compliance officer.

A transfer student may participate immediately in any sport in which they did not participate and/or did not sign an athletic aid agreement for at the previously identified institution after abiding by all NAIA eligibility rules.

The transfer rule does not apply when a member of the SSAC discontinues a sport or sports for any period of time (NAIA or SSAC wide suspensions of sports due to extenuating circumstances are not considered a discontinuation of the sport).

There are no appeals to 8.2 and granting of releases is at the discretion of each SSAC member institution.

- 8.3. Graduate student transfers:** A student who competes in one or more varsity contests at a member institution (institution A) and completes all requirements for a baccalaureate degree, who has remaining athletic eligibility, may transfer to another SSAC institution (institution B) and compete without serving the one calendar year suspension noted in 8.2 in order to enroll in and pursue a graduate degree or second baccalaureate degree in a major/field of study/program not offered at the graduate level by institution A, if the athletic director of institution A grants a release on the official SSAC graduate transfer release form.

Eligibility certification at institution B must be accompanied by a statement from the registrar on institutional letterhead verifying that the student is enrolled full-time, as defined by the institution for graduate students, in classes required for completion of the major/field of study/program indicated on the graduate transfer release form during each term of certification at institution B.

- 8.4. SSAC Membership and Eligibility:** When any SSAC member institution makes application and is accepted to join another national affiliation (NCAA Division I, II or III) or another NAIA conference, then the transfer rule will no longer apply to student-athletes leaving that school during their provisional period (NCAA) or until the termination of SSAC membership for within NAIA movement. For example, if an SSAC school joins the NCAA, the transfer rule does not apply starting at the beginning of the multi-year provisional period. If an SSAC member is moving to a different conference, the transfer rule does apply upon their termination date with the SSAC. Students are free to sign with and accept athletic aid from a second SSAC institution effective July 1st (or other date as specified by the separation agreement).

- 9.1. All proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be in writing. Amendments can be generated by the Board of Presidents, Executive Committee or Board of Athletic Directors.
- 9.2. Members of any committee can submit proposed amendments to the Board of Athletic Directors for its review and referral to the Board of Presidents for approval. A favorable two-thirds vote will be necessary for adoption of amendments.
- 9.3. Such votes as mentioned in 9.2 can occur at a regular or a called meeting or through an electronic vote with at least one week advance notice.
- 9.4. If changes are mid-year they should not wait to be submitted for review, the Board of Athletic Directors or Commissioner can notify Presidents via email with changes to the Sport and Championships Manual, and provide the members of the Board of Presidents a reasonable period of time to respond to proposed changes

Article 10 — Annual Meetings

10.1. Regular and Special Meetings of the Board of Presidents

- 10.1. A. The Board of Presidents shall hold one regular annual meeting and shall also meet at other times upon the call of its Chair.
- 10.1. B. There will be a meeting of the Board of Presidents to be held after the conference's Annual Spring Meeting and prior to the beginning of the next academic year. The location and agenda of this meeting will be decided upon by the Executive Committee and the Commissioner.
- 10.1. C. The Board of Presidents shall be convened for a special meeting by the Chair upon the written request to the Commissioner of four or more members stating the definitive reason for the meeting.
- 10.1. D. Notices of meeting shall be by written notice emailed to the president of each active member institution either by the Chair or Commissioner at the direction of the Chair.
- 10.1. E. The agenda for each meeting of the Board of Presidents shall be prepared by the Commissioner and submitted to the president of each active member institution at least one week in advance of the meeting. Items to be included in the agenda must be submitted to the Commissioner at the request of the Chair or the Commissioner.
- 10.1. F. The president of an active member institution may designate anyone on his/her administrative staff as his/her official representative at a meeting of the Board of Presidents. That representative may be seated at the meeting only by the majority vote of active member institutions' presidents in attendance.

10.2. Regular and Special Meetings of the Executive Committee

- 10.2. A. The Executive Committee shall hold one regular annual meeting and shall also meet at other times upon the call of the Chair.
- 10.2. B. The annual meeting shall be held mid-year with a recommended meeting prior to the regular annual meeting of the Board of Presidents.

10.3. Annual Spring Meeting

- 10.3. A. There will be a meeting each spring sponsored by the Board of Athletic Directors to carry out responsibilities outlined in this *Constitution*.
- 10.3. B. Each of the committee representatives should make every effort to be present: Board of Athletic Directors, Sport Committees, including the Trainers Committee and Sports Information Directors Committee.
- 10.3. C. The location and agenda of this meeting will be decided upon by the Board of Athletic Directors.
- 10.3. D. Details of this meeting will be handled by the officers of the Board of Athletic Directors and/or the Commissioner.

Article 11 — Interpretations and Rulings

11.1. Request for Interpretations

- 11.1. A. At the request of a president, faculty athletics representative or athletic director, or upon his/her discretion, the Commissioner shall promptly interpret any rule or provision of the *Constitution* and determine its application(s) to an actual or stated prospective situation.
- 11.1. B. An informal request may be made verbally. The Commissioner shall make an interpretation in

response to informal requests either verbally or in writing, and may require the request to be submitted in writing.

- 11.1. C. A formal request for interpretation shall be in writing and signed either by the president, faculty athletic representative or athletic director.

11.2. Procedure for Interpretations

11.2. A. Interpretations in response to formal requests shall be in writing, a copy of which shall be sent by the Commissioner to member of the Executive Committee.

11.2. B. The Commissioner may involve the Ethics and Champions of Character Committee as an aid in deliberating rules or provisions of the *Constitution* or an appeal not addressed by the Executive Committee and/or Board of Presidents. If this occurs, this Committee shall be provided: (1) a synopsis of the circumstances; (2) the nature of the violation; (3) the frequency of an institution's abuse of rules; and (4) any substantive evidence being utilized for the basis of an appeal.

11.2. C. The Conduct and Ethics and the Champion of Character Committee may render an opinion or recommend referral to the Commissioner or the Executive Committee.

11.3. Investigation Expenses

11.3. A. Any expenses over \$500 for the investigation will be the responsibility of the institutions that are found to be at fault. If no fault is found in the controversy among conference institutions the expense will be incurred by the institutions that instigated the investigation.

11.3. B. In the event a member institution supports recourse beyond the normal appeal process as outlined in the *Constitution* and such action results in upholding the ruling of the Board of Presidents, any and all cost to the conference shall be borne by the institution instigating judicial review.

11.4. Procedure for Appeal

11.4. A. The president of a member institution, or his/her designee with written authorization by the president may appeal an interpretation, ruling or penalty to the Executive Committee.

11.4. B. The appeal shall be filed with the Commissioner.

11.4. C. The Executive Committee's decision shall be final unless that body, of its own volition or upon request of the appealing active member, refers the appeal to the Board of Presidents for adjudication and finalization.

Article 12 — Violations and Penalties

12.1. Forfeitures

12.1. A. If an active member institution withdraws his/her team and refuses to finish a contest with a conference institution without sufficient reason, the Commissioner shall have the authority to declare forfeiture.

12.1. B. Failure to complete a mandated conference contest prior to the end of the season shall result in forfeiture to the offending team.

12.2. Cancellation of a Season

12.2. A. An institution's failure to fulfill the commitment of a sport in the declaration of sports sponsored will result in the following penalty:

1. The offending institution will be responsible for any financial burden placed upon member institutions.

2. The institution may be placed on probation for up to two years in the specific sport.

12.2. B. If the institution fails to meet the obligation of the specific sport in the probationary period, the issue will be brought before the Executive Committee.

12.2. C. The Commissioner, Executive Committee and Board of Presidents have the power to intervene in an extraordinary circumstance.

12.3. Reports and Investigations of Violations - It is the duty of every coach, active institutional staff member, or student-athlete to report to the faculty athletics representative and/or athletic director of his/her institution any alleged, reputed or indicated violation(s) of the SSAC or NAIA rules.

12.4. Conference Violations

12.4. A. In the event of violation(s), investigative information and recommendations shall be submitted by the faculty athletics representative and/or athletic director to the president.

12.4. B. If the president believes that there is substantial evidence supporting an alleged violation(s) (even if it involves his/her own institution), he/she shall forward a complete report to the Commissioner,

and if another active member institution is involved, a copy of the report to the president of that institution.

- 12.4. C. The Commissioner shall make a preliminary investigation. He/she shall inform the accused of the nature of the charge and give him/her full opportunity to present any evidence to disprove the allegation.
- 12.4. D. The Commissioner, after hearing all evidence, shall take appropriate action, or if warranted, recommended the Executive Committee review the case.
- 12.4. E. The Executive Committee may conduct an investigation of a case and take appropriate action or recommend the case be brought before the Board of Presidents.

12.5. Violations and Penalties

- 12.5. A. Enforcement - The Commissioner, Executive Committee or Board of Presidents, determining that an athletic director, coach, manager, institutional staff member, or representative to be in violation of conference or NAIA rules may impose penalties.
- 12.5. B. Violations of Conference Rules by Staff Members or Representatives
 - 12.5. B.1. He/she violates provisions of the *Code* or other rules of the SSAC or the NAIA.
 - 12.5. B.2. With his/her knowledge, actual or implied, any active member of his/her staff, or any active member of the squad coached by him/her, or any student or assistant engaged in his/her squad violates any provision of the *Code* or other rules of the SSAC or the NAIA.
 - 12.5. B.3 He/she falsifies or permits the falsification of records bearing on the status of a student.
 - 12.5. B.4. He/she solicits the attendance at his/her institution of any prospective student with an offer of financial aid or other inducement not authorized at his/her institution, the conference or the NAIA.
 - 12.5. B.5. If by his/her knowledge, actual or implied, plays any student-athlete who is ineligible.
- 12.5. C. Penalties to Staff Members or Representatives
 - 12.5. C.1. Private reprimand or public censure of him/her.
 - 12.5. C.2. Prohibit him/her from appearing in any capacity with his/her team for one (1) or more games, one (1) or more seasons or one (1) or more sports.
 - 12.5. C.3. Prohibit him/her from contacting student-athletes or prospective student-athletes either on or off campus or both.
 - 12.5. C.4. Prohibit him/her from acting in any role in any phase of intercollegiate athletics at his/her current institution or at any conference institution for a stated period.
 - 12.5. C.5. Subject him/her to any other reasonable penalty.
- 12.5. D. Penalties to Active Member Institutions
 - 12.5. D.1. Privately reprimand or publicly censure.
 - 12.5. D.2. Have any one (1) or more of its athletic contests forfeited, nullified or canceled.
 - 12.5. D.3. Place on probation with the effect of precluding it, during probation, from being eligible for any conference championship, honors or awards or national championships.
 - 12.5. D.4. Recommend expelling from the conference.
 - 12.5. D.5. Subject it to any other reasonable penalty.
- 12.5. E. Report of Punishment
 - 12.5. E.1. All punishments or penalties imposed shall be promptly reported by the Commissioner to the presidents, faculty athletic representatives and athletic directors of the active member institutions.
 - 12.5. E.2 Public announcement of punishment, if deemed necessary, shall be made only upon final determination of a case, which shall be after all appeals are taken.

Article 13 — Adoption and Amendment of the Constitution and the Policies and Procedures Manual

13.1. Adopted Legislation - Regulations shall become effective upon the adoption by the vote of two-thirds of the presidents of all member institutions.

13.2. Amendments to Legislation

- 13.2. A. Administrative regulations may be amended by the vote of at least two-thirds of the member institutions, balloting through their respective presidents, at a meeting of the Board of Presidents to become effective on the date provided in the vote adopting the amendment.
- 13.2. B. A proposed amendment may be submitted in writing to the Board of Presidents by any active member of the Board of Presidents or by action of the Board of Athletic Directors.

13.2. C. Proposed amendments may be initiated by the Board of Athletic Directors or the Commissioner.