Additional Health Care Protections Supported at 4th Annual Autonomy Meeting

Medical Treatment for Injuries to be Provided for at Least Two Years Post-School

*Over Four Years, Autonomy Has Led to Reforms in Time Spent Playing Sports, Cost of Attendance, and Multi-Year Scholarships,*

-- Helping Students Succeed in College and in Life --

INDIANAPOLIS – January 19, 2009  For the fourth year in a row, representatives of the Autonomy Five conferences met at the NCAA’s annual convention to approve additional protections and benefits for students who play intercollegiate sports.

This year, schools voted to assure that medical costs for athletic injuries are covered by the school, along with a host of measures designed to clarify more precisely permissible recruitment benefits. As a result of a proposal adopted earlier this week to start the basketball season three days earlier, the autonomy schools adopted a required three-day break from all required athletic activities during the school’s winter break.

Recognizing that some students who are injured playing sports need medical treatment after they have left school, the conferences adopted a measure to provide treatment for at least two years after the student has left his or her institution.

In addition, representatives approved a measure changing the word “spouse” to “significant other”, so that fiancées and/or domestic partners of student-athletes and coaches are eligible receive permissible benefits.

“Our students put a lot of time and effort into athletics and we want to do all we can to help and protect them, especially when it comes to health care,” the five commissioners of the ACC, Big 12, Big Ten, Pac-12, and SEC said in a joint statement. “For four years in a row, we have made significant reforms, all of which are aimed at helping our students become successful in college and in life.”

The meeting concluded on Friday, January 19 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Previously-adopted reforms include protecting athletic scholarships from being canceled due to athletic performance, providing full cost-of-attendance stipends, and for the first time ever, a new structure that allows students to vote on legislative matters. Last year’s meeting resulted in changes to students’ schedules allowing them to have more free-time away from mandatory sports requirements.

The following is a summary of the reforms that have been put in place:

**TIME BALANCE REFORMS – 2017**
• The Autonomy Five conferences, in consultation with students, coaches, faculty and administrators, approved changes giving students more time to pursue academics, work, internships, or additional rest and recovery.

• Students who play sports will have an additional 21 days away from athletics, in most cases.

• Student-athletes will be involved in the establishment of their schedules, allowing for more transparency for student-athletes than ever before.

COLLEGIATE ELIGIBILITY – 2016
• Prior to full-time collegiate enrollment, an individual who is drafted by a professional baseball team may now be represented by an agent or attorney during contract negotiations, without impacting future collegiate eligibility.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL & INDEPENDENT MEDICAL CARE – 2016 & 2015
• To better protect the safety of students competing in athletics, medical officials at each school have "unchallengeable autonomous authority" in deciding a student’s ability to play a sport.

• A Concussion Safety Protocol was established to review each institution’s concussion management plan.

COST OF ATTENDANCE REFORMS – 2015
• For the first time in history, students who play sports at an Autonomy Five institution are receiving full cost of attendance benefits as part of their athletic scholarship.

• These students can receive stipends to cover expenses in addition to their scholarships.

• In total, with scholarships and cost of attendance stipends, students may receive benefits for tuition, fees, room, board, books, transportation, general supplies, and personal expenses, allowing many of them to graduate debt-free.

MULTI-YEAR SCHOLARSHIP REFORMS – 2015
• The Autonomy Five conferences voted to guarantee that athletic scholarships cannot be canceled for poor athletics performance.