

SPO 1 Summary Report, 2018

Academics and Life Skills



Strategic Positioning Outcome Area No. 1: Academics and Life Skills

The Vision: Help Division II student-athletes earn their degrees, obtain and develop leadership skills, maintain healthy and productive lifestyles, and engage with their communities.

GOALS	INITIATIVES	HOW THEY HELP
Degree Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Path to Graduation Toolkit• Academic Metrics Initiative• Degree-Completion Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online resources help SAs earn degrees• Improve data collection; strengthen policy decisions• \$440,000 added over next five years
Develop Leadership Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More SAAC Representation• Division II SAAC Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAAC votes at Convention; more leadership opportunities through committee service• Monthly newsletter links national and campus SAACs
Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FAR Advocacy• Independent Medical Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best practices resource helps FARs champion student-athlete mental health and wellness• 2017 Convention legislation increased decision-making authority for medical personnel on campus
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activities at DII Championships• Helper Helper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2017, more than 2,400 SAs impacted more than 9,400 community members at 100+ events• Online resource helps institutions track SA volunteer experiences and engagement efforts

Initiatives COMPLETED since the adoption of the plan in 2015 that support these goals:

Path to Graduation Online Toolkit: A digital toolkit designed to help the Division II membership understand and apply new legislation in the “Path to Graduation” initiative includes sections designed specifically for student-athletes, faculty athletics representatives, compliance officers and faculty advisors. The toolkit debuted in the fall of 2015, and membership feedback has been positive, with more than 15,000 visits to the website since the toolkit debuted. The new Path to Graduation requirements began in August 1, 2016, when new standards regarding progress toward degree, as well as eligibility standards for student-athletes who transfer into a Division II school from a two-year institution, became effective. Changes in initial eligibility for all student-athletes take effect in August 2018.

SAAC Network: A monthly newsletter initiated in October 2015 and information-sharing resource links national SAAC and NCAA SAAC liaisons with the SAAC president and SAAC advisor at every Division II institution. The network provides information and comment on issues relevant to Division II student-athletes. The interactive network also allows campus SAACs to share best practices and ask for suggestions from peers.

Best Practices for Faculty: Participants at the 2015 FAR Advanced Institute created a supplement for the model FAR document that educates FARs about addressing student-athlete mental health and well-being issues. The best practices were printed and distributed to FARs and were posted on NCAA.org as well in a new section devoted to FAR resources.

Initiatives LAUNCHED and still being implemented since the adoption of the plan:

Additional Funding for Degree Completion Awards: Part of the Foundation for the Future initiative, \$440,000 will be distributed over five years (2016-21) 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 makes it simple for schools and organizations to connect student-athletes to meaningful volunteer experiences and track their community engagement efforts. The initiative was among 10 to receive funding from the Foundation for the Future program. Initial efforts in the 2016-17 academic year will be to raise awareness of the tool within the SAAC network and begin compiling and tracking data.

Academic Metrics Review: This initiative examines the division's metrics for measuring academic success and is designed to improve the accuracy of data collection and strengthen the foundation upon which academic policy decisions are made. The initiative was among 10 to receive funding from the Foundation for the Future program. The research phase included surveys and interviews with a representative sample of 25 Division II institutions. The response from those institutions was overwhelmingly positive, as personnel at each were enthusiastic about shoring up deficiencies in their data collection and submission processes. The Academic Requirements Committee will review these findings at its February 2018 meeting and determine next steps.

Monitoring the Effects of the New SAT: The Academic Requirements Committee is working with the NCAA Eligibility Center to ensure that no prospects are negatively affected during the transition to a new SAT affecting students graduating in 2017 or after.

SAAC "Super Region" Conventions: These will be conducted annually in various super regions to enhance student-athlete participation in the governance structure and enable student-athletes and administrators to better understand issues affecting Division II student-athletes. The initiative was among 10 to receive funding from the Foundation for the Future program. The first one was held in Washington, D.C. in November 2017 for the East and Atlantic regions.

EXISTING INITIATIVES implemented before the adoption of the plan

Graduation Rates/Academic Success Rates Data Collection: Division II graduation rates and Academic Success Rate data are compiled annually, and conferences are provided template language to promote these rates to media and other constituents.

NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships: The program awards 58 grants (29 for men and 29 for women) of \$7,500 for each sports season.

Division II Degree Completion Award Program: Established in 2001, the program has distributed more than \$4 million to help more than 1,000 deserving student-athletes complete their first baccalaureate degree.

CoSIDA Division II Academic All-America Program: Established during the 2011-12 academic year, the program offers recognition for Division II student-athletes in all sports. The program has been a huge success compared to the previous version that lumped Divisions II and III recognition together in a “college division” category.

NCAA Elite 90 Award: This honors the student-athlete with the highest grade-point average at each NCAA championship finals site. Winners are touted nationally via NCAA.com, and institutions promote their recipients in their local media as well.

Presidents Award for Academic Excellence: Established in 2011, this annual award honors Division II institutions with overall Academic Success Rates of 90 percent or higher.