### Initial Report

**Last Modified: 11/30/2015**

1. **Feedback on the Implementation of Financial Aid up to the Cost of Attendance**  
   In your opinion, is the issue of roster expansion a concern to the Division I Commitment to Fair Competition that needs to be addressed proactively based on the information available?

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2. **Would you prefer more data about how cost of attendance in equivalency sports is affecting the Division I Commitment to Fair Competition before modifying the legislation, as the legislation went into effect August 1, 2015 (i.e., Concept No. 1)?**

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3. **Whether proposed for the 2016-17 legislative cycle or at a later point, please review Question No. 3 to determine if it is a viable alternative to address potential negative impact to Fair Competition in equivalency sports arising out of the recently adopted cost of attendance legislation. 3. Does the concept of allowing schools to provide cost of attendance without impacting the equivalency numerator and denominator, only in proportion to a student-athlete’s equivalency computation, appropriately address the concern over the application of cost of attendance (i.e., Concept No. 2)?**

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4. **In addition, the working group reviewed Proposal No. 2015-67: Financial Aid – Maximum Limits on Financial Aid – Team Limits – Nonathletically Related Institutional Financial Aid. The proposal, if adopted, will have a direct impact on the charge of the working group as it may further the concern regarding the application of cost of attendance in equivalency sports. However, because the proposal will be voted on in April 2016 by the NCAA Division I Council, the working group is interested in gathering the membership’s feedback as it relates to the proposal. Therefore, do you support the Division I Council adopting Proposal No. 2015-67 as legislation in April 2016?**

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5. Use the space below to provide additional comments pertaining to the application of cost of attendance.

Text Response:

We must make sure that the Power 5 schools do not use COA to increase roster sizes in equivalency sports.

I think the easiest way to meet the spirit of the "cost of attendance" legislation while not affecting fair competition in equivalency sports would be to allow up to cost of attendance only for those student-athletes receiving a full grant-in-aid. This would eliminate the issue of manipulating the denominator for partial scholarship kids, those denominators would remain the same as previous.

The cost of attendance legislation was not intended to provide additional student-athletes on your roster with athletic aid (cost of attendance) but rather it was intended to provide those student-athletes who are currently on athletic aid with the cost of attendance additional funds. Using cost of attendance funds to create additional scholarship opportunities for other students on the team is not what the concept intended.

The administration of Cost of Attendance has been challenging, and the lack of clear legislation as it relates to equivalency sports has fostered an atmosphere of the wild west for coaches and administrators. While I've been a supporter of the student-athletes ability to gain a full cost of attendance model, the NCAA and it's lack of clarity in setting guidelines has been a failure on many levels.

The cost of attendance is to better the financial situation of those student-athletes currently on aid. To award the additional aid that was adopted to aid those students to others not on aid for the purpose of roster expansion is WRONG!

The information that you sent previously about this topic was very helpful. Thanks.

It is time to align NCAA rules for institutional financial aid with institutional standards. The rising costs of higher education simply demand a more progressive approach, providing some relief to student-athletes and parents in the equivalency sports who struggle with these issues.

We need to ensure that Coast of Attendance is used for its intended--and advertised--purpose, and that is to cover the delta between a traditional scholarship and the real costs to attend a particular institution. If we want to give "partial" Cost of Attendance in proportion to their scholarship, that satisfies the intent of the rule. However, using the extra available funds to simply increase one's roster by creating what are essentially additional scholarships, is a foul.

We should table 1015-67 to allow the working group to study the issue entirely.

Much more work needs to be done to understand the implications of this legislation. The long term effects were understated and not well understood in the initial dialogue.

#3 - While limiting COA to the same % of equivalency would address the problem of roster creep, it could create several issues on campus including: 1) potential administrative hurdles between athletics and institutional financial aid 2) potential administrative burden for small award (e.g., books scholarship worth 2% also = 2% COA)?

This is a very complicated matter. There are pros and cons to each side of the debate. Thus, after much consideration, we would like to see more data before pursuing proactive action. We do not yet know the full scope of the problem, if there is one.

It is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and confidence in the shared governance process that the current "loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that provides them an opportunity to stockpile talent and/or to more aggressively recruit with their de facto increased scholarship limits. This was certainly not the intentions of the COA legislation and also circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships (which is no doubt altered when certain programs have the funds for the de facto increased equivalencies that will enhance their opportunities for both on- and off-campus (and/or better seeds).

We answered no to question number 1 due to its wording. Certainly, roster creep is a problem that needs to be evaluated over the first several years of the new COA legislation implementation. However, we don't think it is necessarily an area that needs to be addressed proactively.

There is no way nonathletics aid should be deregulated. This will absolutely crush the system. The financial aid system is outdated. Sports like women's tennis should be equivalency, not head count. Baseball, m/W xc and track and field need more scholarships.

The issue of roster expansion is a real one, but the overall impact is relatively small (25 or so in most cases?). In the end, while it does not get more $ to SA's, it does provide more opportunity to a greater # of SA's overall and that's not a bad thing in a big picture view. This does affect "fair competition" but not in a substantial way. The larger issue is if we see it is that we are granting more $ to students who may not necessarily need (across all sports) and that does more damage to the overall image the NCAA and member schools. The vast majority are using the COA $ for things over than "necessities": I have let all along, that the awarding of COA for all sports, should be based on financial need. That would ensure those who need it actually receive it and would also allow the current $ being spent on this initiative to go to a greater # of deserving SA's. While slighly off topic, that should be evaluated and a model proposed to help improve where we currently are.

It is clear that competitive equity will seriously be affected if the current trend of the application of COA monies continues. The philosophical and financial impacts are already of concern.

The white paper indicated that the group's diversity ensured all Division I perspectives were represented. Was there a compliance professional in the group? Will the National Association of Athletics Compliance be one of the groups consulted? They best understand the implications of rules changes and additions and it would be wise to consult them ahead of time, since rules can be complex and have unintended consequences.

Cost of attendance was adopted to increase aid for individual students—not to increase the number of student-athletes who could receive aid. It pertains to aid based on athletic ability and should not be intermingled with non-athlete related financial aid.

These are yes/no questions which do not have perfect yes/no answers. Some of these questions require additional data points and time to determine if we are heading in the correct or incorrect direction. The COA legislation appeared to respond to the external demands to provide additional financial support for head-count scholarship athletes and with that comes significant unintended consequences for the equivalency sports.

There is currently no clear regulation of institutions and their cost of attendance figures. While these figures are determined by an institution's financial aid office, and not athletics, the potential for athletics to have power to put pressure on these figures is too great to not be regulated by an outside entity.

I think the simplest solution is to only allow COA funded to be provided to student-athletes receiving a full GIA. Also, I fully support 2015-67. It is the right move for student-athletes and will reduce administrative burden on the institutional, conference, and national level.

This is a significant issue. It affects competitive equity and shared governance. The current "loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that was not intended is not acceptable. This was certainly not the intentions of the COA legislation.

More discussion generally is needed regarding COA and the impact it has on the membership. We need to study these issues from numerous perspectives to truly understand what the unintended consequences are before passing legislation. Any legislation passed must be done for appropriate reasons and not to assauge the media, public sentiment, or to avoid potential lawsuits.
After a call that took place today with the COA staff, we felt that we supported the following statement that was issued by the COA: 

Addressing this important issue now is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and confidence in the shared governance process. The current "loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that provides them an opportunity to stockpile talent and/or to more aggressively recruit with their de facto increased scholarship limits is not acceptable. This was certainly not the intent of the COA legislation and also circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships (which is no doubt altered when certain programs have the funds for the de facto increased equivalencies that will enhance their opportunities for both at-large berths and/or better seeds). It is clear that competitive equity will seriously be affected if the current trend of the application of COA monies continues. The philosophical and financial impacts are already of concern. There are a number of institutions and conferences in our constituency that have either not been in support of, or, at best, shown limited support of the COA legislation as originally intended. But, now, we are witnessing further developments that are disturbing.

The financial aid calculation that allows increased equivalencies, as it currently exist, directly benefits those institutions with greater financial resources. Whereby institutions may provide grants-in-aid above the NCAA sport limits which is an NCAA violation. This loophole must be closed.

This is a critical and important time in collegiate athletics. The ongoing debate and application or, in many cases, the misapplication of COA, will have a lasting impact on college athletics for generations to come. Addressing this issue now is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and the shared governance process. Currently, higher funded institutions are provided the opportunity to manipulate COA that provides competitive advantages. From my knowledge and belief, this was not the intention of COA legislation. Furthermore, the manipulation of the current "loophole" in the legislation circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships (which is no doubt altered when certain programs have the funds for the de facto increased equivalencies that will enhance their opportunities for both at-large berths and/or better seeds).

The time to address the many issues providing cost of attendance will bring has already cost. During the implementation phase, we voiced our concerns that this change, as it relates equivalency sports, would allow institutions to exceed previous levels of scholarship restrictions. We have already heard of instances where student-athletes who would have previously attended institutions like ours, are now choosing to join other institutions that have more generous scholarships based on the new cost of attendance legislation. We cannot wait any longer to implement restrictions as it relates to cost of attendance and equivalency sports. If counter limits are not placed on all equivalency sports, we are fearful that competitive nature of NCAA Division I athletics will begin to erode. Institutions with larger financial budgets will be able to recruit and hold on to the majority of top tier student-athletes, which in turn will limit the competitiveness of institutions that have less resources.

This issue is negatively impacting shared governance and creating distrust in the process and the intent of higher resourced programs. The unintended consequence of providing higher resourced programs the opportunity to stockpile talent by effectively increasing their scholarship limits is detrimental to the effective operation of the entire division.

All aspects of the application of all types of financial aid are important to the effective operation of the entire division. While we know that there are ways to award scholarship amounts that can circumvent any proposed legislation, we still feel it is important as a matter of policy and philosophy to emphasize that cost of attendance stipend is meant to go to current scholarship athletes, not repurposed to assist student-athletes with academic concerns. The working group should re-address these concepts like capping the total number of rowing S-AAs that can be on athletic scholarship and/or institute a minimum equivalency like in baseball. While we do not want to deprive any S-A of getting their full cost of attendance paid for, we are not in favor of having more and more aid not be counted toward team totals as that essentially raises the total equivalencies from 20 to well above 20 depending on a school's resources and policies. Please keep in mind that most S-A As do not gain regular admission to their university; they utilize student-athlete preferred admission. Therefore any financial aid they receive, if we are intellectually honest, is in fact based on athletics ability.

Need more data to be able to answer #3 appropriately, especially based on our answer to #2.

We feel strongly the need exists to collect additional data relative to cost of attendance before making any changes to the current process. To make change now would be speculative at best as to how institutions would apply COA to equivalency sports. The question of should we allow COA to be applied to equivalency sports is a bit disingenuous. If we were concerned about the negative impact COA might have on fair competition, then we would accept the concept as presented could be a viable alternative. However, since we don't feel that concern exists yet, we don't believe there is a need for a viable alternative until more data had been collected. Therefore, we answered "no."

The intent of the cost of attendance legislation was not to allow institutions with disposable resources to be able to use these funds for "recruiting" purposes. If larger institutions continue down this path then it defeats the purpose of shared governance. Changing financial aid limits affects access to championships, seeding for tournaments, and at large bids. It seems the membership and the majority opinions are not reflected in the COA distribution for the upcoming legislative cycle.

Addressing this important issue now is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and confidence in the shared governance process. The current "loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that provides them an opportunity to stockpile talent and/or to more aggressively recruit with their de facto increased scholarship limits is not acceptable. This was certainly not the intention of the COA legislation and also circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships (which is no doubt altered when certain programs have the funds for the de facto increased equivalencies that will enhance their opportunities for both at-large berths and/or better seeds).

This important issue is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and confidence in the shared governance process. The current "loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that provides them an opportunity to stockpile talent and/or to more aggressively recruit with their de facto increased scholarship limits is not acceptable. This was certainly not the intention of the COA legislation and also circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships.

The overriding concern of allowing the COA for student-athletes was to treat the individual s-a’s in a manner equal to the scholarship opportunities available to all students. It was intended to be permissive funding that institutions could provide to the student-athletes participating on their squads without changing the number of equivalencies available in any specific sport. The unintended consequence of applying the legislation as written is that for those with the cash resources available, the equivalencies are changed and schools may award the newly available funding to additional student-athletes instead of providing any increase to those included under the original limits. This problem will grow bigger if left unresolved, and the bigger it grows, the more difficult it will become to correct. It is important to act swiftly to correct the legislation so that its original intent is fulfilled, and the deserving student-athletes receive the new funding.

In order to ensure competitive equity the continued changes to how COA is to be calculated will greatly diminish competitive equity and go against the principles of the shared governance process.

Cost of Attendance for equivalency sports should not that difficult to address (though as of now it is difficult to understand). If you are giving 50% of a grand-in-aid, then it should be 50% of the cost of attendance figure (just like it is 50% of the current tuition and fees, room and board and extracurricular purposes - and should count as 50 for scholarship purposes). COA should not be used as a loophole to horde talent while staying within scholarship limits for equivalency sports. Was never intended to be that and should not be allowed to happen.

Competitive equity will be affected if the current trend of the application of COA monies continues. The philosophical and financial impacts are already of concern. There are a number of institutions and conferences in our constituency that have either not been in support of, or, at best, shown limited support of the COA legislation as originally intended. But now, we are witnessing further developments that are threaten the collegiate model.

Cost of attendance legislation will continue to grow the gap between the "have's" and the "have not's". This will in-turn completely change the landscape of Division I athletics as we know it, and the "Commitment to Fair Competition" idea will be lost completely.
Proportionally must come into play as it pertains to any proposed legislation for this item. Some formula that is equitable and not place any institution and/or conference at an unfair disadvantage.

It will be incredibly difficult to address Cost of Attendance in equivalency sports. If COA is removed from numerator and denominator, coaches will still recruit with it. They will offer a PSA a lower countable equivalency and "stack" the noncountable COA amount into the total amount provided to the PSA.

Initial signs indicate some roster creep. We were in support of the proportionality concept as it met the intent of the legislation by providing funds to existing student-athletes. If proposed 2015-67 will have a direct impact on the charge of the working group then supportive of delaying action; however, feedback be gathered in preparation for April Council meeting.

The issue of cost of attendance arose of out of the need to provide student-athletes on a 100% (full athletics scholarship) more. Those that were not on full scholarship (i.e., the majority of athletes in equivalency sports) were not facing an artificial individual ceiling as they were already receiving an athlete was worth a 100% scholarship value. If a coach felt a student-athlete sport they could award them 100%. If they felt they only worth 50% they awarded them 50%. To provide someone on 50% athletics scholarship an automatic Cost of Attendance adjustment is not a logical way to think about the use of these funds. In equivalency sports, it should be up to the coach to disburse resources available in their sport. If they want to give 30% of their coaches, an equivalency so be it. IF they want to use it to give on athlete who is currently on a 50% scholarship a 100% scholarship so be it. If they want to use it to provide partial scholarships to several more athletes so be it. That is the entire point of equivalency sports. If we are going to legislate how they use this funding, then we ought to jule eliminate the notion of equivalency sports and make all sports head count sports.

The reason we are dealing with this is to address litigation. If schools or conferences are using this to gain greater advantages in recruiting and not in an effort to enhance student welfare, they will only place themselves in greater peril of litigation down the road.

I strongly feel that the COA is not being intended for its original purpose of getting more money to student-athletes and instead is resulting in scholarship creep for equivalency sports. I am disappointed that an area that was intended to be a part of shared governance appears to have been manipulated by the autonomy committees to increase scholarship limits for equivalency sports. I hope that this is simply an unintended consequence which can be resolved specifically for equivalency sports.

It seems as if the intent of the COA Legislation is being misapplied in the case of equivalency sports. Equivalency programs seem to be using the additional room under their equivalencies to acquire more student-athletes instead of covering the additional costs incurred by the current student-athletes on their rosters.

Provide more data to base opinion.

The question is whether or not the proposed legislation on keeping the numerator and denominator the same is legally objectionable and if so, are we just opening ourselves to further legislation. While I do worry about roster creep and increasing the number of “scholarships” through the cost of attendance, I am not sure once this box was opened, that we can keep it open with further restrictions.

Too early for the Conference to comment on 2015-67

While we appreciate the Working Group's efforts to date, the [redacted] has concerns about the proposed solutions and survey format as follows: 1. Both before and after the adoption of the cost of attendance legislation, a number of expressed concern about the potential for counter expansion in equivalency sports that could result. This was the primary reason for the review of these issues. 2. We disagree with the stated rationale for the Committee's decision not to evaluate counter limits in specific sports for which they may be helpful (item #1 in the "Concepts Discussed but Not Supported" section). We do not read the data to say that "schools are not aware of the potential for counter expansion". 3. The data simply demonstrates that there is a range across Division I. However, taking soccer as an example, approximately three-fifths of all Division I institutions and approximately half of non-autonomy institutions that sponsor soccer are 50-100% funded (both for men and women). This is a significant percentage of the Division I membership in these sports. 4. We believe that counter-expansion may not be a full enough understanding of the legislative mechanics to be able to address this concern.

These programs are the ones for which counter expansion potentially impacts the Division I Commitment to Fair Competition and they are the reason that management of counter expansion is important. 3. We believe counter expansion should be addressed sooner rather than later, as it will become more difficult to introduce a solution once awarding behavior has changed. Further, we believe that a sport-by-sport approach to this issue will be necessary, as some sports (e.g., soccer) may be better candidates for counter limits than others (e.g., track & field). We understand that there will be administrative challenges in looking at this issue in depth on a sport-by-sport basis; however, we believe that this issue presents of enough of a competitive issue to merit a more in-depth review.

With regard to questions 1 & 2, the [redacted] were strongly of the view that it is premature to react now without more data. With regard to question 3, that concept is too rigid. A better approach would be to consider identifying a set scholarship roster size like in the sport of baseball. A sport should not have to apply strict proportionality to the increase to learn scholarship dollars that results from the COA increase. E.g., a coach might want flexibility in awarding the COA dollars across her roster (without increasing squad size). E.g., one SA might have been on 40% athletics aid and another on 25% aid, but perhaps the coach would want to award the SA on 25% aid a larger amount of the new COA dollars that were put into the sport's budget. (Perhaps that SA has greater need.) That discretion should be allowed and can be accomplished without expanding the roster of SAS who are on athletics aid.

The concerns regarding fair competition due to cost of attendance legislation aren't immediate but should be monitored. Definitely more than a year of data is needed to determine if legislation should be changed. If it is determined to be an issue more than one variable alternative needs to be vetted before it is presented.

1. Both before and after the adoption of the cost of attendance legislation, a number of expressed concern about the potential for counter expansion in equivalency sports that could result. This was the primary reason for the review of these issues. 2. We disagree with the stated rationale for the Committee's decision not to evaluate counter limits in specific sports for which they may be helpful (item #1 in the "Concepts Discussed but Not Supported" section). We do not read the data to say that "schools are not aware of the potential for counter expansion". The data simply demonstrates that there is a range across Division I. However, taking soccer as an example, approximately three-fifths of all Division I institutions and approximately half of non-autonomy institutions that sponsor soccer are 50-100% funded (both for men and women). This is a significant percentage of the Division I membership in these sports. We believe that counter-expansion may not be a full enough understanding of the legislative mechanics to be able to address this concern. These programs are the ones for which counter expansion potentially impacts the Division I Commitment to Fair Competition and they are the reason that management of counter expansion is important. We believe counter expansion should be addressed sooner rather than later, as it will become more difficult to introduce a solution once awarding behavior has changed. Further, we believe that a sport-by-sport approach to this issue will be necessary, as some sports (e.g., soccer) may be better candidates for counter limits than others (e.g., track & field). We understand that there will be administrative challenges in looking at this issue in depth on a sport-by-sport basis; however, we believe that this issue presents of enough of a competitive issue to merit a more in-depth review.
The existing athletics award and financial aid model can be modified for the betterment of both the student-athlete and the institution. However, the institution should be careful to protect against unforeseen financial haves that may have a significantly larger impact on some schools than on others. The Division I Council should take seriously the consequences of any legislative adoption, amendment or implementation concerning athletics and institutional aid that may create a residual financial impact.

In the current climate focused on student-athletes, it seems non-athletically related institutional financial aid should absolutely not count toward maximum institutional grant-in-aid limitations. To deny or 'make countable' a student-athlete's normal financial aid administered by an institution through its regular process for the awarding aid to students generally seems entirely unreasonable, while at the same time providing new funds for the miscellaneous expense allowance. In all practical terms, when non-athletic aid counts toward team scholarship caps, it limits student-athlete on that team from receiving aid that is available to every other student at that school with absolutely no regard to athletics. The threshold to deny or limit a student-athlete from receiving regularly awarded funds with absolutely no regard for athletics should be very high or show a very significant opportunity for competitive harm. Although it's a complicated formula, counting non-athletic aid in the equivalency limits benefits to students. We will continue denying on one end, but add COA on the other. I think allowing non-athletic financial aid to no longer count toward team limits is one of the most student-athlete friendly financial aid recommendations, and it's with existing funds schools already budget in their financial aid office. It seems to offend logic to continue denying students existing, budgeted funds at institutions, while at the same time expecting new aid into the system for an Admissions budget that was largely unbudgeted. While the stockpiling argument may have a degree of merit, no sufficient evidence has been provided for how derogating equivalencies will lead to harmful, runaway roster stockpiling any more than adding COA will have competitive advantages/disadvantages.

Addressing this important issue now is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and confidence in the shared governance process. The current " loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that provides them an opportunity to stockpile talent and/or to more aggressively recruit with their de facto increased scholarship limits is not acceptable. This was certainly not the intention of the COA legislation and also circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships (which is no doubt altered when certain programs have the funds for the de facto increased equivalencies that will enhance their opportunities for both at-large berths and/or better seeds).

It would be good to gather more information on how non-autonomous schools are dealing with the cost increases. Most seem to favor flexibility.

I think we need to fix "roster expansion" as soon as possible but am not sure that the proposed option does that. Further, adopting legislation to preclude roster expansion does not preclude ALSO collecting data for X years to determine if other modifications might be needed in the future.

The financial aid officers in our conference gathered several times last fall to discuss a workable COA model and mentioned several times that a proportionality model for equivalency sports won’t practically work at many institutions because of their "hierarchy" policies. Most of those require scholarship $ to cover identified educational expenses on the SA's account (tuition, fees, books, room/board) before they cut a check to the SA to cover the "other expenses" amount. So, if we can only do proportionally, someone may write a GA agreement to receive 50% of those initial elements and the 50% of the "other expenses". That ‘other expenses’ 50% will be applied, pursuant to policy, to the SA's account to cover the remaining 50% of the initial elements and the SA would not see any $ to cover those ‘other expenses". Plus, under this proposed model that SA is a 5 equivalency and the school gets the benefit of using the 50% ‘other expenses’ for another SA which seems contrary to what some members of the working group are trying to accomplish. The point is, whether done through the legitimate hierarchy policies or you have a smart coach writing GA agreements, there are legitimate (not contrary to the rules themselves) ways that the concept would play out in a way that is contrary to their intent.

Addressing this important issue now is critical for both the commitment to fair competition value and confidence in the shared governance process. The current "loophole" to allow higher funded institutions to manipulate cost of attendance in a manner that provides them an opportunity to stockpile talent and/or to more aggressively recruit with their de facto increased scholarship limits is not acceptable. This was certainly not the intention of the COA legislation and also circumvents the established ground rules in regards to Shared Governance that should be utilized for matters related to changing athletics financial aid limits and access to championships (which is no doubt altered when certain programs have the funds for the de facto increased equivalencies that will enhance their opportunities for both at-large berths and/or better seeds).
since its implementation, (2) the intended and unintended outcomes associated with the two legislative concepts included in this survey (i.e., 2015-16 and 2016-17) and (3) the full basis of fair competition in intercollegiate athletics, which is linked to state scholarship opportunities, currently exempt institutional aid, cost-of-attendance variances and the interest in continuing to enhance support provided to student-athletes. Concept 2 does not curb the potential unintended consequence of “roster expansion” that may occur in some scenarios, especially in high-equity sports. However, it is time for a more comprehensive approach to student-athlete compensation.

While the issue of equitable sports is a concern, other issues also require more standardized attention such as a) issue of Pell over COA. There is a mixed opinion by institutions about whether to adjust their school policies to address this. b) without having a standard stipend, student-athletes are being paid in the required categories: financial aid, scholarships. However, it is time for a more comprehensive approach to student-athlete compensation. The issue of roster spread is different than the numerator/denominator issue. Those student-athletes that were on the old GIA version of athletics aid will graduate/graduate eligibility in a few years and the cost of attendance denominator is a new number without concern for the old GIA denominator. The issue of roster spread is more along the lines of a large “bucket” of money available to coaches/leaders. What needs to be determined is if all sports should follow the baseball minimum 25% model as opposed to giving multiple SAs “books”.

We believe that the counter expansion presents enough of an immediate competitive concern that the issue should be addressed sooner rather than later, especially as it will likely become more difficult to introduce/apply any corrective legislation after several years of unregulated awarding. We also believe that the proposed proportionality requirement is not an effective remedy to this issue, and that a more comprehensive, sport-by-sport review and approach will be necessary. Working Group’s efforts to date, the Conference has concerns about the proposed solutions and survey format as follows: 1) both before and after the adoption of the cost of attendance legislation, a number of expressed concern about the high potential for counter expansion in athletics-related sports could result. This was the primary reason for the review of these issues. We do not feel that the Conference’s decision not to evaluate counter limits for the Conference’s sports was a mistaken decision. For sports in which they may be helpful (item #1 in the “Concepts Discussed but Not Supported” section) we do not read the data to say that “schools are not awarding the maximum amount.” The data simply displays that there is a range across Division I. However, soccer as an expansion sport deserves more attention and approximately half of non-autonomy institutions and private soccer (100%-100%) funded (both for men and women). This is a significant percentage of the Division I membership in these sports and likely correlates strongly with the programs that are competitive at a level warranting serious consideration for NCAA selection. These programs are the ones that are really driving the Division I commitment to Fair Competition, and the reason that management of counter expansion is important. 3) We believe counter expansion should be addressed sooner rather than later, as it will become more difficult to manage as time passes. Further, we believe that the data on counter expansion in this issue will be necessary, as some sports (e.g., soccer) may be better candidates for counter limits than others (e.g., track & field). We understand that there will be administrative challenges in looking at this issue in depth on a sport-by-sport basis; however, we believe that this issue presents enough of an immediate competitive concern that a closer look is warranted at this time. 4) We do not feel that the proposed solution #2 (allowing additional expenses in proportion to equilibrium and keeping additional expenses out of the scholarship numerator and denominator) will address the counter expansion in this issue. Although the math becomes more difficult, this approach would not appear to have any impact on the potential for counter expansion as it is allowed by the COA legislation to student-athletes. Financial aid is an extremely complex area of legislation and it is likely that some of the constituent groups surveyed may not have a full enough understanding of the legislative mechanics to understand these recommendations at a level sufficient to provide informed feedback. It is clear to us simple questions and questions that the options presented and format of the questions may actually be too simplistic to allow for full feedback. For instance, questions 2 and 3 on the survey are presented as an either/or scenario but it is not clear that this should be the case. For instance, we do not believe that question #3 presents a solution but also are not in favor of delaying action on this issue in favor of gathering further data, so we have answered “NO” to both questions. As another example, much of the feedback provided in the earlier points of this response are necessary to meaningfully understand the responses provided to the yes/no questions above. Given these limitations, we are concerned that this feedback cycle will not provide a comprehensive assessment of these important issues and believe that they should not be used to significantly influence next steps or establish positions on the proposals in the concept document.

Our concern with Concept 2 is that grant amounts can be manipulated to achieve the same outcome as the current equity calculations. a) To invoke the Commitment to Fair Competition in this context is to miss the point of the Commitment to Fair Competition. The Commitment exists to affirmatively and expressly make clear that institutions are not equal due to a variety of factors, including resources. Within the context of the Commitment, the only issue is whether all institutions may avail themselves of the new definition of a full grant in aid. Since all institutions may, in fact, avail themselves of the definition of a full grant in aid, the Committee’s interpretation of a full GIA, the Committee’s understanding of a full GIA, the Committee’s understanding of competitive equity is the entire point of the Commitment; using the Committee as a purportive basis for trying to achieve said unattainable equity is antithetical to its purpose. b) The purpose of cost of attendance legislation was not to “address comprehensively the educational costs of attending a full-fledged student-athlete,” the purpose was to make sure that student-athletes are afforded the same opportunities as other students. c) The purpose was to make sure that a SA on a full scholarship actually received a full scholarship. The legislation said nothing of the who, why, or how much of distributing athletically related financial aid. d) The purpose of proposal 2015-67 is to make sure student-athletes are not disadvantaged in any financial aid to which they qualify as students at their institutions. Over the years, what has to be thousands upon thousands of dollars of financial aid has to be declined due to an individual’s status as a “student-athlete.” The nature of the question within the context of this survey/Working Group paper seems to suggest that the pursuit of competitive equality (an unattainable goal) should trump the best interests of student welfare. e) It is not clear whether the concerns expressed would, in fact, manifest themselves as suggested (i.e., through roster creep). Factors such as playing time and schools of like resources competing over the same individual are certain to impact the possibility of roster creep as well. To illustrate in a different context, why do women’s basketball scholarships go unused at high-resource institutions? The point being, aid available to distribute to additional people does not necessarily result in that aid being distributed to additional people. Even if there were an impact, we would not know that there were a few years’ worth of data available for comparison purposes (how does post-COA life compare to pre-COA life)? Nothing should happen prior to 1) data supports what is now only a hypothetical notion and 2) the data is of such a concern that it is a policy consideration. The new definition of the terms cost of attendance, financial aid, and equivalency is not being applied correctly and this will impact all the CaA applications. For this reason, there is a belief that the thought of collecting more data is advisable. In addition, feedback from conference compliance administrators was that coaches groups are also gathering feedback, which further substantiates not being proactive and waiting to see how the coaches feel, as they ultimately are going to be the ones that are impacted. Concept 2: makes the unhappiness of coaches clear and does not completely resolve the issue because there are not the same opportunities that are being awarded. The purpose of Concept 2 is to allow student-athletes to make the same decisions that are currently available to all students. The concept of allowing the COA for student-athletes was to treat them in a manner equal to the scholarship opportunities available to all students. It was intended to be permissive funding that could provide institutions to student-athletes participating on their squads without changing the number of equivalencies available in any specific sport. The unintended consequence of applying the legislation as written is that for those with the cash resources the potential equivalency increases are changed and schools may award the newly available funding to student-athletes instead of providing an increase to those included under the original limits. This problem will grow bigger if left unresolved, and the bigger it grows, the more difficult it will become to correct. It is important to act swiftly to correct the legislation so that its original intent is fulfilled, and the desiring student-athletes receive financial aid.
the new funding. Data has not been provided to indicate this is a problem within the membership. All information to this point is anecdotal (as confirmed by the NCAA staff) and it would be a mistake to create and sponsor legislation for the 2015-16 legislative cycle for an issue that is not a proven problem. We understand the desire to be proactive on this topic, but the membership and NCAA staff needs to be deliberate and prepared to make decisions on the new world of cost of attendance to determine when the data has been gathered, trends can be learned and solid information can be obtained in order to make sound decisions in this area. Concern: We believe the adoption of NCAA Autonomy Proposal (2014-13 - COA legislation) directly impacted the financial aid available for equivalency sports and thus; the concern to monitor and keep track of trends. We further review on a sport-by-sport basis. Priority: Our greatest concern involves the half of the institution funding equivalency sports (e.g., men's and women's soccer). Data Collection: The data collected to date reflects a gap between autonomy and non-autonomy teams in terms of squad size and funding. It is likely that this gap was evident before Proposal 2014-13 and it is likely to continue in the future. We support the effort to proactively monitor the institutional impact and understand the impact of cost of attendance legislation. We suggest that the issue continue to be monitored on a sport-by-sport basis. It would be helpful if the presented data was more clear on the on the source dates of the data collection. (We are not sure if the data reflects an average over several years or a single year of data.) Further, it is important to continue to collect data since several non-autonomy institutions are “phasing-in” plans to issue COA as budgets are developed and fund-raising efforts are underway. Data Collection Content: The data generally states the average autonomy program is (nearly) maximizing their squad sizes and related funding for equivalency sports. Alternatively, the data is projecting that the average non-autonomy program is not maximizing the full squad size or funding. NCAA Proposal 2014-13 is not impacting equivalency sport programs. We question the integrity of the data for the non-autonomy teams when presented in the aggregate. Without information describing the range and rationale of sponsorship among the non-autonomy programs, it is challenging to understand the impact to equivalency sports and/or the institutional trade-offs made to accommodate the expanded financial aid limit. Given the vast differences among non-autonomy institutions, with respect to their sport sponsorship structures, priorities, and funding models, additional information would be helpful to better understand the range and rationale for such disparity within the non-autonomy data presentation (e.g., sport prioritization on campus, financial cycles). The “counter creep” being experienced currently is inconsistent with the intent of the recent restructuring or the cost of attendance legislation. It was stated clearly during the restructuring process that scholarship limits would not be impacted unless approved through shared governance. It was also understood that the unintended consequence of “counter creep” would be addressed immediately by the NCAA Council to remedy the issue. A solution must be identified and passed to eliminate “counter creep.” Waiting on more data will only make a remedy more difficult. The more years that go by with cost of attendance funds being awarded in equivalency sports, the harder it will be to change the law and to influence in which some teams and student-athletes will be awarded these funds prior to remedying legislation, this can be managed and will roll off within 4-5 years. Cost of attendance legislation was meant to provide additional support to scholarship student-athletes, not to add additional scholarships to equivalency sports.

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These comments are in response to Question 3 above. Technically, the concept DOES address the concern (for those who have the concern). However, a “yes” vote could appear to indicate that we feel that there is a concern that needs to be addressed (which we do not, see Question #1), rather than simply indicating that the concept does. In fact, address the issue articulated in the question. Therefore, we abstain.

Q1. Yes, for all equivalency sports but especially for FCS Football. Q2. We prefer concept #2, but think collecting data would be helpful as we move forward. Thus, we would like more data, but if not collecting data precludes us form supporting concept #2. We don't think options #1 and #2 are mutually exclusive options. Q4. There is too much room for abuse if this proposal is adopted.

This issue should be addressed immediately as the current loophole that allows higher resource institutions to manipulate cost of attendance is not acceptable. NCAA legislation was not the intention of the COA expansion directive is in opposition to the Division I Commitment to Fair Competition and also is detrimental to ensuring that the appropriate student-athletes receive the additional funding as was intended.

1. Our support for 2015-16 is independent of the cost of attendance/ equivalency issues currently being contemplated by the working group. However, if a sport-specific regulations in equivalency sports (e.g., soccer vs. baseball) model should be reconsidered by the working group as a priority because it adds another variable to the potential for roster-size manipulation. 2. Regarding Question 2 - We believe waiting for 2-3 years to collect data would only complicate the ability to adopt future changes because it is very difficult to reduce opportunities for financial aid across all sports once the practice has already begun. It makes little sense why we would elect to be reactive instead of proactive to an issue that many in the membership believes modification before it becomes too unwieldy or worse, compromises the allocates that student-athletes receive. 3. While the working group suggests that sport-specific regulations for sport-specific regulations for sport-specific regulations are not relevant since these changes were due to academic/APR reasons, it remains that changes to the financial aid model in that sport also were done to manage roster size and ensure student-athletes were receiving an appropriate amount of aid. This is directly a student-athlete welfare issue and applies to all sports, not just baseball and not just sports with poor academic performance. 4. Thus, we oppose the working group to stop being proactive and forward-thinking in its review of this issue to address the problems and abuse before they occur. Waiting until that happens would be a mistake and ultimately harmful to the overall student-athlete experience by compromising the principle of fair competition.

Our university believes we need more time to study this. We propose delaying implementation.

In regards to question 3 above, schools that were fully funded were in slight support of yes to the question. Schools that were partially funded were split 50/50 on whether the no question while schools that had no scholarships were unanimous in voting no to the question. It was only a slight majority answered yes. It was very split again in regards to level of funding in how schools answered the question. Fully funded programs voted yes, while partially funded were in a slight majority of voting no.

There are very few bowling schools that are awarding cost of attendance so we would like to see if there is a problem before we act on it. COA has only been in place for a semester and it's hard to believe this is already a problem.

It is premature to revise the cost of Attendance legislation. The autonomy schools considered an amendment from the SEC to restrict the provision of additional COA to others, but the amendment was withdrawn do to clear lack of support. Ultimately, the scholarship dollars are all going to student-athletes, and that should be the priority.

1. While our membership is not overly concerned about roster expansion, there is considerable concern that misapplication COA could lead to counter expansion and a further reduction of competitive balance. 2. Our membership was nearly unanimous in their desire for continual evaluation and research on COA and the effect on rosters, competitively and beyond. 3. Our membership was split along the lines of those at institutions providing COA and those doing it selectively, or not at all. For those at schools providing COA the answer was a unanimous "yes," while not unanimous the vast majority of our non-autonomy group schools voted "no." As an association, we see COA as an established element of financial aid going forward and thus believe a "yes." 4. Our position in regards to question 4 is that bylaws governing athlete's should ensure that athletes are treated in a like manner to all students with rare
exception. As students at schools that provide both merit and need-based financial aid generally have access to both types of aid, we believe athletes in equivalency sports should also be able to receive both without penalty.

1. While our membership is not overly concerned about roster expansion, there is considerable concern that misapplied COA could lead to counter expansion and a further reduction of competitive balance. 2. Our membership was nearly unanimous in their desire for continual evaluation and research on COA and the effect on rosters, competitive equity, etc. 3. Our membership was split primarily along the lines of those at institutions providing COA and those doing it selectively, or not at all. For those at schools providing COA the answer was a unanimous "yes", while not unanimous the vast majority of our non-autonomy group schools voted "no". As an association, we see COA as an established element of financial aid going forward and thus believe that that concept appropriately addresses the issue. 4. Our position in regards to question 4 is that bylaws governing athletes should ensure that athletes are treated in a like manner to all students with rare exception. As students at schools that provide both merit and need-based financial aid generally have access to both types of aid, we believe athletes in equivalency sports should also be able to receive both without penalty.

Following are percentages reflected in the responses to questions 1-4 Question 1 Yes = 36% No = 62% Question 2 Yes = 75% No = 25% Question 3 Yes = 42% No = 59% Question 4 Yes = 65% No = 35% The majority of comments centered on a few themes. => The wording in the questions was confusing. => Disappointment that Full Cost of Attendance was implemented without full consideration of the impact on various schools/conferences. => Approval of the idea that providing additional financial aid via FCOA, as well as not having non-athletically related financial aid count against equivalency are healthy measures, as this will broaden the resource pool to assist more student-athletes. => Implementation of FCOA will significantly widen the already wide advancement play gap between schools/conferences with this ranging from schools that have the ability to lavishly provide extra benefits to those that will not, or cannot, afford to pay FCOA. => FCOA should be regulated so each school offering FCOA is required to do so at the same financial level. This is so FCOA is not used as an additional "bargaining chip" in the recruiting package. => FCOA should be used at the discretion of coaches/school administration so as to utilize the additional aid to assist those with need, rather than offering FCOA to those that don't need the aid. => FCOA should be paid in proportion to scholarship. => Some concern expressed about "stockpiling" players through manipulation of additional financial aid sources.

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With all the changes that are potentially coming in the 2015-16 legislative cycle related to countable financial aid, how equivalency sports' aid is awarded may change starting August 1 (as highlighted in question 4). With teams that are not fully funded to NCAA maximum equivalencies, this proposal will impact the COA application. For this reason, there is a belief that waiting to collecting more data is advisable. In addition, feedback from conference compliance administrators was that coaches groups are also gathering feedback, which further substantiates not being proactive and waiting to see how the coaches feel, as they ultimately are going to be the ones making roster decisions. Concept no. 2 does not completely resolve the issue because there may be schools that are issuing COA dollars on a need basis, even if SAI are not on athletics aid. Currently, that can happen because there is no link to the proportionality and is permissible per the Autonomy Q/A question 22. In the provided case study, as understood, the SA could not be provided COA dollars to cover other expenses because they are not on athletics aid counting toward limits. With the intent of the COA legislation to cover other expenses for student-athletes regardless of team status, removing a cross-section of student-athletes seems to not completely address the issue.