

Executive Summary

Division III Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Working Group
Prepared for the 2018 NCAA Convention Division III Issues Forum Attendees

Highlights

1. **Working group formation.** At the October 2016 Division III Management Council meeting, council members endorsed the establishment of a working group to examine the current and potential programming, resources and recognition of the LGBTQ community and its allies in Division III. Possible outcomes included the examination of the current involvement and role of athletics departments related to LGBTQ resources and programming; creating a best practices resource and collaboration with the NCAA Office of Inclusion to develop programming as needed. For the past year, the group has conducted teleconferences and ultimately, developed a membership-wide survey to better understand the current landscape and climate surrounding LGBTQ issues on Division III campuses and conferences. In November, the working group met in-person and examined the survey results to explore potential Division III LGBTQ educational resources, visibility and recognition opportunities and communication best practices at the campus, conference and national levels.
2. **LGBTQ membership survey.** An LGBTQ Division III-wide membership survey was distributed to individuals from four demographic groups. The survey yielded 4,541 total responses, which are disaggregated by demographic group below:
 - a. Presidents and athletics direct reports (80 responses);
 - b. Athletics administrators and coaches (1,384 responses);
 - c. Commissioners/assistant commissioners (44 responses); and
 - d. Student-athletes (3,033 responses).

Overall, 53 percent of respondents identified as female and 46 percent as male, with most athletics administrators identifying as male and most student-athlete respondents as female. Overall, 81 percent of respondents identified as heterosexual/straight. The remaining 19 percent identified as LGBTQ with one percent of all respondents identified as transgender.

3. **Landscape and culture in Division III.** Overall, most respondents considered their athletics departments and conferences to be welcoming and free from discrimination toward the LGBTQ community. However, findings revealed noteworthy differences of opinion when disaggregated by LGBTQ/non-LGBTQ identity where smaller proportions of those that identified as LGBTQ agreed.

Institution. More than eight out of 10 athletics and higher education administrator respondents, and approximately two-thirds of student-athletes, identified themselves as allies of the LGBTQ community. Three-quarters of respondents agreed their athletics department or conference was free from LGBTQ discrimination and was very welcoming or welcoming of the LGBTQ

community. However close to 20 percent were unsure. Respondents that were not student-athletes indicated higher levels of awareness of openly LGBTQ individuals.

Conference. More than half of respondents reported their athletics conference was very welcoming or welcoming, while an additional quarter were not sure. LGBTQ student-athletes were less likely to consider their conference welcoming (48 percent) than their non-LGBTQ peers (62 percent). Similarly, LGBTQ administrators and coaches were less likely to consider their conference welcoming (46 percent) than their non-LGBTQ colleagues (58 percent).

Athletics overall. Nearly all respondents indicated LGBTQ individuals would be safe as spectators at an intercollegiate contest, and more than 80 percent of those who identified as LGBTQ indicated they felt safe communicating about their sexuality and/or gender identity. While feeling a sense of security within athletics, there may be a different experience outside of athletics as one out of five survey respondents indicated they have witnessed anti-LGBTQ comments or slurs.

Overall, most respondents were unaware of their Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) campus or conference engagement on LGBTQ issues. Over 95 percent of athletics administrator and student-athlete respondents who identified as LGBTQ, did not fear losing their job or their roster spot. However, within-group comparison showed that male LGBTQ student-athletes (19 percent) and male administrators and coaches (32 percent) were the most likely to take a neutral position perhaps reflecting a greater sense of uncertainty.

- 4. Education/resources.** The most commonly cited ways that institutions support students and staff were campus-wide LGBTQ committees, safe zone trainings and campus LGBTQ centers. The most commonly used resources were inclusive sportsmanship statements, NCAA Champions of Respect, NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes and the You Can Play campaign. Nearly half of respondents reported other campus offices and centers as available resources. Overall, respondents ranked guest speakers and regularly-scheduled open dialogue sessions as the most helpful types of LGBTQ programming.

More than half of survey respondents indicated their institution, athletics department or conference provide LGBTQ staff trainings at least once per year. At the same time, 29 percent of respondents reported staff trainings never take place. The most commonly cited reasons for lack of staff training were that these types of trainings did not align with the institution's values and lack of financial resources. Two other reasons cited were that athletics department leadership did not believe the training was necessary even though they were supportive of the LGBTQ community, and that human resources staff lacked training or understanding.

5. **Visibility and recognition.** Approximately half of survey respondents agreed the NCAA, Division III and their institutions recognize LGBTQ student-athletes, coaches and administrators for their contributions to intercollegiate athletics, while 39 percent agreed their conferences recognize LGBTQ student-athletes, coaches and administrators for their contributions to intercollegiate athletics. At the same time, approximately one out of five respondents indicated not knowing about such recognitions. Nearly half of LGBTQ respondents indicated they were comfortable with national, conference or institutional recognition for their contributions to intercollegiate athletics and celebrating them for their LGBTQ identity. More than one-quarter were undecided. On the issue of establishing a national LGBTQ recognition award, more than one-third of survey respondents across all groups reported being undecided, while a similar percentage agreed they would like to see such an award.

6. **Policies.** Sixty percent of athletics administrators and coaches reported their institution has a written LGBTQ nondiscrimination policy while only 38 percent indicated their athletics department has such a policy. Of those reporting having either policy, approximately three-quarters indicated the policy explicitly included sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Approximately one-third of respondents indicated they did not know if the policies addressed anti-LGBTQ slurs, jokes, comments, actions and behaviors.

Handbook. Less than half of survey respondents indicated their athletics department and their student-athlete handbooks included the support and promotion of an inclusive, respectful environment for the LGBTQ community. Additionally, more than one-third of respondents did not know about the policies including if there was a transgender student-athlete participation policy.

Recruitment. One quarter of survey respondents indicated their athletics department's communications and recruiting materials included a nondiscrimination clause. Of those with nondiscrimination clauses, 41 percent indicated the clause referenced LGBTQ. Of those respondents who identified as an LGBTQ ally, 83 percent reported feeling supported in their efforts to promote inclusion and respect in recruiting and hiring. Only 13 percent indicated a belief that coaches were using the identity of LGBTQ coaches as a negative recruiting tool while the same proportion did not know. However, when disaggregated by LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ identity, LGBTQ coaches were nearly five times more likely to agree that there was negative recruiting based on LGBTQ identity (33% versus 7%). More than one-third of LGBTQ coaches indicated they were fearful of losing prospective student-athletes because of their identity, more so for female coaches (40 percent) than male coaches (20 percent). However, student-athlete respondents overwhelmingly reported the identities of LGBTQ coaches and student-athletes were not being used to discourage them from attending those institutions.

7. **Possible next steps.** The working group discussed developing Division III-specific LGBTQ resources, initiatives, and programming. Specifically, the working group discussed the following possibilities:

- a. Train the trainer program.
- b. Template language for inclusive handbook policies and statements.
- c. Certification program for LGBTQ inclusive institutions.
- d. LGBTQ reception.
- e. Co-branded NCAA inclusion material.
- f. SAAC facilitation guide for student-to student dialogue.

8. **Resources.** The working group has relied on multiple research documents to inform its discussions. The following resources are referenced in the 2018 NCAA Convention Division III PowerPoint: (need to hyperlink below)

- a. [NCAA Office of Inclusion LGBTQ webpage](#)
- b. [NCAA Five Ways to Have an LGBTQ-inclusive Athletics Department](#)
- c. [NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes](#)
- d. [NCAA Champions of Respect](#)