



**REPORT OF THE NCAA DIVISION III
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
JULY 26, 2017, TELECONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and roster.** The NCAA Division III Diversity and Inclusion Working Group commenced business at 10:03 a.m. Eastern time Wednesday, July 26, 2017. Gerard Bryant, chair, commenced the teleconference. He welcomed the group and conducted a roll call.
2. **Report of April 13, 2017, teleconference.** The working group reviewed the report and had no changes.
3. **Division III Career Next Steps program.** Staff provided an executive summary from the inaugural Career Next Steps program held May 31 to June 1 in Indianapolis in conjunction with the NCAA Career in Sports Forum. Eighteen (18) students who had previously participated in the Student Immersion Program attended the professional development program. Overwhelming, the feedback was positive. However, some lessons learned included:
 - a. Better defining the correlation between the program and the Career in Sports Forum, and
 - b. Better coordination of information from the governance and leadership development staffs.
4. **Division III Student Immersion selection committee.** Mr. Bryant, Dan Schumacher, Jason Verdugo and Natalie Winkelfoos volunteered to serve on the selection committee for the 2018 Division III Student Immersion Program. Committee responsibilities will consist of ranking the applicants in early October and participating in one teleconference to select the 40 participants.
5. **Building Toward a Career in Collegiate Athletics resource.** The working group reviewed the draft resource to assist undergraduates move into an athletics career. The working group recommended it be expanded to include coaching opportunities. Heather Benning will incorporate the changes, and staff will seek additional feedback from

Leadership Development. Once all edits are incorporated, staff will ask its graphic designer to create a full-color one-page resource.

On its September teleconference, the working group will review and finalize the resource for an October release to the membership.

6. Division III voluntary graduation rates – next steps. On its April teleconference, the working group received an update on the current Division III voluntary student-athlete graduation rate collection process and data. The data shows a correlation between football federal graduation rates and recruiting class size. The larger the recruiting class, the lower the graduation rate – especially with recruiting classes of 50 or more players. The most recent Division III graduation rate for football players was 53 percent. Staff also noted that the graduation rate of Division III African-American football student-athletes was 36 percent. This rate is 18 percentage points lower than Division I African-American football players (54 percent). There were two factors noted that are likely influencing the low graduation rate:

- a. Enrollment management strategies (i.e., the large recruiting class sizes); and
- b. Shortcomings with the federal rate collection (i.e., no transfers).

On this teleconference, the NCAA research staff provided additional information and context to the recent collection of Division III graduation rates of football players and specifically African-Americans by detailing the research and lessons learned in Division I.

- a. Setting football and men's and women's basketball aside, the NCAA research staff believes the student-athletes in Division I are similar to Division III regarding high school and academic backgrounds.
- b. One of the goals of academic reform in Division I has been to increase the number of African-American student-athletes graduating from their institution. Based on the available Division III student-athlete graduation rate information and anecdotal evidence, the research staff concludes without athletics scholarships, the issue in Division III is African-American student-athletes not being retained to their sophomore year. Retention research historically demonstrates that students who are retained to their second year are more likely to graduate from their originally enrolled institution.
- c. The Division I graduation rate crisis was identified and supported by the Division I membership leadership (i.e., presidents and chancellors). Once the crisis was

identified, it was quantified with data collection and research, which led to evidenced-based policy initiatives.

The working group discussed the following:

- a. Focus on the problem of lower graduation rates for Division III African-American football players. Since the current collection process is voluntary, some may not think it is a representative sample. In each of the past two years, approximately 200 Division III institutions have submitted data.
- b. Since Division I requires the submission of pre-and continuing college academic data, it allows Division I to set academic admission and progress to degree standards. Since Division III currently doesn't require these national standards, the working group discussed the benefits of mandating the collection of data. Mandatory reporting would provide valid and reliable data, which, in turn, would allow for the potential development of evidenced-based policies.
- c. The working group noted that both Divisions I and II have found success, via policies and initiative, to increase the graduation rates of African-American student-athletes.

Next steps include the following:

- a. Request Presidents Council discuss the merits of 2019 NCAA Convention legislation to mandate the reporting of student-athlete graduation rates. The working group believes it is important to explore this concept for the following reasons:
 - (1). A census of valid and reliable data allows for legally and scientifically defensible evidenced-based policies.
 - (2). Enhancement to the Institutional Performance Program (IPP), the free self-assessment and benchmarking tool provided by the NCAA.
 - (3). Institutions are currently required to submit similar data, per federal regulations, so the submission to the NCAA may not be overly burdensome.
 - (4). The membership discussed this concept at the 2012 NCAA Convention and at the time, the membership was opposed to it for two reasons. First, it should be a local issue and institutions should have autonomy to identify and address their own issues. Second, reporting the data was overly burdensome.

- (5). In the last five years, Division III and the entire Association has placed a greater focus on diversity and inclusion. Seven years of Division III graduation rate collection consistently shows an issue with the graduation rates of Division III African-American football student-athletes.
 - (6). A mandatory collection, similar to Divisions I and II, will enable Division III to tell its very positive academic story and highlight its philosophy. The current data shows that overall Division III student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the student-body and typically higher than the other NCAA divisions.
 - b. On its September teleconference, the working group will continue to discuss the rationale for a proposal to Presidents Council to mandate the submission of student-athlete graduation rates.
7. **Recognition award.** Time did not permit this discussion so it was tabled until the September teleconference.
8. **Next steps.** The chair summarized the teleconference's discussions. On its September teleconference, the working group will determine next steps related to its proposal regarding mandatory student-athlete graduation rates. It also will review the "Building Toward a Career in Collegiate Athletics" resource and discuss the possibility of an annual recognition award to recognize an individual, institution or entity for championing women and/or ethnic minorities.
9. **Future teleconferences.** The working group's next teleconference is scheduled for 11 a.m. Eastern time Wednesday, September 13.
10. **Adjournment.** The call adjourned at 2 p.m. Eastern time.

*Staff Liaisons: Louise McCleary, Division III Governance
Sonja Robinson, Office of Inclusion
Amy Wilson, Office of Inclusion*

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| Teleconference date: July 26, 2017 |
| Attendees: |
| Heather Benning, The Midwest Conference |
| Gerard Bryant, John Jay College of Criminal Justice |
| Javier Cevallos, Framingham State University |
| Jason Fein, Bates College |
| Dan Schumacher, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire |
| Jason Verdugo, Hamline University |
| Natalie Winkelfoos, Oberlin College |
| Absentees: |
| Nnenna Akotaobi, Swarthmore College |
| Jessica Jean, John Jay College of Criminal Justice |
| Joe Onderko, Presidents Athletic Conference |
| Nicolle Wood, Salem State University |
| NCAA Staff Support in Attendance: |
| Eric Hartung, Louise McCleary, Todd Petr. |
| Other in Attendance: |
| None. |