ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.
   - None.

2. Nonlegislative items.
   a. 2016 host honorarium. Tracie Hitz reviewed the goals and metrics from the 2016 Women’s Final Four. Anucha Browne noted that the staff is working to put together a list of clear expectations for a host to receive an honorarium upon conclusion of the event. The committee approved the $200,000 host honorarium for the Horizon League and IUPUI as co-hosts of the 2016 Women’s Final Four.
   
   b. Release of top 16 ranking. The committee reviewed the process and software for its top 10 rankings that took place in February and noted that the feedback has been positive. ESPN requested the release of a top 16 ranking, instead of a top 10, ranking for 2017. The committee approved releasing three top 16 rankings on ESPN’s Big Monday platform.
   
   c. Update to team selection criteria. The committee updated team selection criteria to include: “To be selected as an at-large team, a team must have a record of .500 or above.” The committee did this to align with other championships and set a minimum record standard for selecting at-large teams.
   
   d. Update to bracketing principles. The committee updated bracketing principles as follows: “By order of the s-curve, the committee will assign each team to a regional and first-/second-round site by taking into account distance from site, mode of transportation and accessibility by fans.” The committee believes this provides more flexibility to place teams at sites that are closer to home, where fans can travel and potentially increase attendance.
   
   e. Automatic qualification for the 2017 championship. The committee noted the Ivy League will now have a conference tournament to determine its automatic qualifier. The committee recommended that the Division I Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee award the following 32 conferences automatic qualification status for the 2017 championship: America East Conference; American Athletic Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Atlantic Sun Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Big East Conference; Big Sky Conference; Big South Conference; Big Ten Conference; Big 12 Conference; Big West Conference; Colonial Athletic Association; Conference USA; Horizon League; The Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Mid-American Conference; Mid-Eastern
Athletic Conference; Missouri Valley Conference; Mountain West Conference; Northeast Conference; Ohio Valley Conference; Pac-12 Conference; Patriot League; Southeastern Conference; Southern Conference; Southland Conference; Southwestern Athletic Conference; The Summit League; Sun Belt Conference; West Coast Conference; and Western Athletic Conference.

f. Joint championship with Men’s Final Four. Due to an upcoming bid cycle, the committee revisited the concept of a joint championship with the Men’s Final Four in-depth with mixed reviews. Some felt it was worth exploring to elevate the women’s game with the potential to be a win-win for all, but many felt there would be issues with feeling subordinate to the men’s championship. The committee voted to support the concept of a joint championship with men’s basketball.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Division I Women’s Basketball Committee mission statement and conflict of interest policy. The committee reviewed each of these statements and made no changes.

2. Review of the collaboration zone. Rachel Kay gave a brief overview of the committee’s collaboration zone website and its functions for the new committee members. The website has recently undergone a software update and redesign, and staff should have it back up for committee use by the end of the month.

3. Division I Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee update. Chris Dawson and Anucha Browne gave an update on the upcoming oversight committee meeting in late June.

   a. Structure and composition. Due to a review by the Men’s Basketball Oversight Committee, the Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee is seeking feedback on a proposal to restructure the sport committee’s composition, including number of committee members, representation and who would approve appointments. The committee supported expanding up to 12 members, as the roster has not increased since 2000 while sport sponsorship has continued to rise during that time. Twelve members would also allow for continuity in rotation. The committee supported increasing representation to five regions to provide more balance, as the proposed regions provide more proportionate ratio of institutions. The committee did not support the oversight committee selecting committee members or having guaranteed slots for autonomy conferences. The committee advised maintaining a similar structure to the men’s committee for consistency.

   b. Strategic Format Review Subcommittee and site selection update. Ms. Browne reviewed the guiding principles of the subcommittee and the notes from its May 23 teleconference. Due to their decision to not pursue format changes to preliminary rounds,
the subcommittee recommended that the women’s basketball championship join the NCAA championships bid process for the regional rounds. The bids went live June 6 and are due by August 12. Hosts will be announced in December.

c. **Equity for student-athletes and their families.** Ms. Dawson and Ms. Browne reviewed an oversight committee discussion regarding equitable experiences for the student-athletes and their families participating in the men’s and women’s basketball championships.

4. **Meeting with Women’s Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) representatives.** WBCA representatives noted that feedback regarding the combined DI, DII and DIII championship in 2016 has been phenomenal, and that the WBCA would support this initiative in the future.

The committee discussed with the WBCA representatives how to keep coaches engaged at the Women’s Final Four. The committee hopes the format change to Friday/Sunday will encourage coaches to stay through the championship game. The committee reiterated that the day shift was made partially in response to coach feedback, so if WBCA ticket sales continue to decline, the NCAA will need to develop a plan for selling tickets to other constituents. The WBCA offered assistance in marketing to fans to make the Women’s Final Four a sellout. Coaches liked the announcement of a top 10 in February. They also hope that Washington, Syracuse, Oregon State making it to the finals for the first time will energize these markets. Staff noted plans for another national media day in the fall and they will be asking for a major social media push from coaches to their fans. The committee suggested that the WBCA invite more senior woman administrators to the WBCA convention to expose them to the convention and Women’s Final Four weekend. The committee believes coaches need to work on their relationship with athletics directors so that the ADs develop an appreciation and passion for the game. The committee also requested that Texas coaches reach out to their fan bases and encourage their attendance in Dallas. The WBCA agreed that this could be more effective than some of the NCAA marketing efforts.

The coaches expressed very strong feelings regarding regionals remaining at neutral sites. The committee continues to weigh competitive fairness by selecting neutral sites and working on ways to increase attendance. Student-athlete feedback indicates they would rather play in full buildings, even if those fans are not cheering for them. If regionals remain at neutral sites, the women’s basketball community needs to figure out how to drive more attendance at those sites. Women’s basketball fans tend to follow their team, so they watch their team on television playing at another site rather than attending the local game. The WBCA asked if the committee had attempted to keep regionals in the same locations more consistently. The committee has encouraged this through the bid cycle, but cities have shown little support.
without empirical evidence indicating that the championship will bring fans to that location. If attendance were to increase, sites may be more willing/encouraged to consistently host.

The WBCA representatives also noted that coaches have indicated little appetite for a joint championship with men’s basketball. Coaches who have had experience with a joint championship at the conference level have said it was not a good student-athlete experience for the women’s teams.

5. Review of 2016 NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Championship

a. Attendance report. Ms. Hitz reviewed attendance figures from the 2016 championship. Attendance was less than what schools report during regular season. When discussed with various campus administrators, the biggest hurdle for not selling championship tickets is the quick turnaround between Selection Monday and the first playing date. The discussion revolved around declining attendance nationwide versus the television experience that the viewer can now receive. Moving forward, marketing plans will emphasize the value-add for in-venue attendance and any VIP or ancillary experiences that would attract fans.

b. Host financial data and ticket sales. Ms. Hitz reviewed financial reporting from all of the preliminary-round sites.

c. Historical financial data. Ms. Hitz reviewed financial data with a year-over-year comparison of revenue and disbursements at each round. Revenue increased with expenses remaining constant at regionals, resulting in a 46 percent increase in receipts. However, receipts and expenses both declined at first and second rounds, resulting in a 5 percent decline in receipts.

d. Travel analysis. Ms. Hitz reviewed an analysis by the NCAA travel department, noting that there were the same amount of drives and charter flights in 2016 as in 2015, though expenses increased because the cost of travel increased in 2016. Overall, the staff and travel department were pleased with the minimal increase in cost.

e. Misconduct. Tina Krah reviewed the misconducts from the championship. The committee discussed how to identify appropriate thresholds of misconduct when it comes to public criticism of the committee and game officials.

f. Operational review. The committee noted access to pregame hospitality at Women’s Final Four, which felt significantly different than previous years. Committee members felt it was important to continue to include committee alumni in those options, particularly when interacting with groups like Beyond the Baseline and AlumNation. Staff noted the changes around hospitality and programming, and will better outline those opportunities for the committee at future Women’s Final Fours.
(1) **Lodging.** Jerrell Price reviewed hotel issues teams experienced during the tournament. Securing rooms during the first and second rounds continues to be a challenge due to the nature of nonpredetermined hosting, but staff is working with potential hosts in advance as much as possible. The committee discussed potentially splitting the blocks for teams and band/cheer to get team blocks into full-service properties closer to the venue but decided that it would put hosts in a difficult situation to potentially find eight different hotels. The committee decided to allow hosts this flexibility instead of requiring it. The committee also discussed whether 35 guaranteed rooms and 10 contingency rooms was an accurate number for hotel blocks, but staff added that actual use by teams varies widely. Increasing the block could put teams in a difficult financial situation, as they’re contractually obligated to pay the charges. There was only one hotel issue during the regional rounds, which was in Dallas. That hotel has been removed as a team hotel for the 2017 Women’s Final Four.

(2) **Transportation.** Ms. Krah reviewed various bus issues for teams during the championship. Most issues revolve around bus drivers not being from the area and are therefore unfamiliar with their way around the city. Overall, transportation at the Women’s Final Four ran smoothly and there was very little feedback on the absence of a shuttle from the airport. Ms. Krah informed the group that, following an RFP process, Anthony Travel has been selected as the new transportation provider for the Women’s Final Four moving forward.

(3) **Game video for teams.** This item was not discussed at the meeting and will be moved to the committee’s October meeting agenda.

g. **2016 Women’s Final Four – Indianapolis.**

(1) **Divisions I, II and III combined championship.** Ms. Browne reviewed some highlights of the combined championship, which has been well received by all. For the future, the committee suggested a social event for all three committees to break the ice and engage in camaraderie. The committee agreed that the joint championship was well received and would support hosting joint championships again in the future.

(2) **Financial update and review.**

- Ms. Hitz reviewed the final audit report from the 2015 championship, noting that the process revealed nothing significant.
6. **2017 Women’s Final Four.**

   a. **Strategic plan.** Ms. Hitz reviewed the strategic plan for the 2017 Women’s Final Four in Dallas. Staff is developing the plan, adding goals and metrics for accountability, and will present it to the Dallas Local Organizing Committee for early partnership and buy-in during the June site visit.

   b. **Schedule shift.** Ms. Kay reviewed the proposed framework for the 2017 schedule since this will be the first year moving from Sunday/Tuesday playing days to Friday/Sunday. Input has been received from the 2016 Women’s Final Four teams and staff is working on how the schedule will be carried out. The committee felt that the biggest loss was the team and fan interaction through autograph sessions; staff is still working on how to incorporate that interaction into the Women’s Final Four weekend. Ms. Hitz noted that programming in Tourney Town will be more robust to help replace some of the fan interactives and corporate partner recognitions lost from Super Saturday. Mr. Price added that a Kay Yow Cancer Fund event will be reworked with the new schedule and will no longer be in the form of a 5k run.

7. **Matters related to media/television/social media.**

   a. **2016 Division I Women’s Basketball Championship ratings.** Natalie Steger reviewed the ratings results, which were down 2 percent overall. Going head-to-head with the men’s tournament on three of four days continues to have a significant impact on ratings for ESPN.

   b. **Social media initiatives.** Rick Nixon reviewed the positive outcomes of social media initiatives throughout the season. There was tremendous growth on Facebook and Twitter and a 14 percent increase in traffic for the women’s basketball season (October through April).

8. **Meeting with ESPN.** The representatives from ESPN reviewed their 2016 strategy, including making sure all No. 1 seeds were showcased, letting the viewer learn the women’s basketball stories throughout the season leading to the championship, and scheduling so that men’s and women’s teams from the same institution were not in the same time slots. The 2016 selection show had the most amount of live team coverage, but the ratings were down 25 percent, so ESPN is working to end the broadcast in a “captivating” way. Overall ratings were down slightly (2 percent), but the digital viewership and minutes consumed continues to grow. There was a 29 percent increase in unique viewers for the Women’s Final Four and a 31 percent increase in live minutes viewed. Despite digital numbers being so high, the digital space (about 2 percent of overall viewership) is not making up for the drop in linear ratings. Ratings were up only on Monday, when the women’s championship was not up against the men’s championship.
ESPN noted that talent adjustments will be coming with Stephanie White and Carolyn Peck moving into coaching positions. Using Beth Mowins in the play-by-play role was very successful for the Women’s Final Four, and ESPN will continue to evaluate talent for next year. They will continue with the Coaches Corner segment at the Women’s Final Four, as it did very well on SportsCenter and espnW. Remote integration, or REMI, is still being discussed as an option, but it will now include talent on-site.

espnW was very successful for March and April. The women’s basketball tournament drives increased use of the site. The espnW team will continue to seek insider access for their social media accounts.

Looking to 2017, the network will collaborate more with institutions and conferences to seek content and stories to highlight, and may rely on schools to film, edit and submit content instead of ESPN producing it. The ESPN group also thought the 2016 national media day was successful, and they look forward to doing it again. The top 10 reveal was well received at ESPN, as they received ample buy-in from various shows and talent at the network. The group asked the committee to do a top 16 reveal in rank order instead of a top 10 reveal in alphabetical order, as was done in 2016. The committee noted that announcing first- and second-round hosts earlier would not benefit ESPN because dates for those sites would not be determined until after ESPN reviews matchups during selection weekend.

Finally, ESPN made clear they are in favor of a return to the Saturday-Tuesday format due to a continued decline in ratings with the Friday-Monday format.


a. Review and discussion regarding conference realignment. Mr. Nixon reviewed the changes from 2015-16 to 2016-17, including conference moves for Northern Kentucky to the Horizon League and Coastal Carolina to the Sun Belt Conference.

b. Review proposed conference monitoring assignments. The committee reviewed proposed conference monitoring assignments for the coming season. Mr. Nixon also proposed use of a PDF form with fields that would standardize the information the committee receives from conferences. The committee supported use of the form over the previously used website.

10. Matters related to national officiating program.

a. Review of 2016 NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Championship. June Courteau and Ms. Krah reviewed successes for the 2016 championship regarding officiating. Ms. Courteau and the regional evaluators saw every official who was selected for the championship at some point during the regular season. Staff continues to refine the watch list
process and how to identify new officiating talent. The nominating process also went well this season, and Ms. Courteau reported a 92 percent call accuracy for the championship.

b. **Review of 2016 NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Championship officials’ selection, assignment and advancement process.** Ms. Courteau reviewed situations in which she has had to make changes to the crews tentatively assigned to the second round, but an official from the first round has already departed the site, leaving no choice but to fly in a new official. Ms. Courteau requested more flexibility in assigning officials for the second round, potentially creating a policy that would delay all officials from departing until after the completion of both games at that site. This change may require some officials to stay an additional night, but it would allow Ms. Courteau to review the second-round matchup and change officiating assignments if needed. It would also allow her to reward officials for their first-round performance.

c. **Precision Time and DV Sport Technology.** Both Precision Time and DV Sport technologies worked well this year with no issues. The use of DV Sport technology has allowed officials to decrease the amount of time to review monitor plays from 64 seconds in 2014 to 36 seconds in 2016.

d. **NCAA Women’s Basketball Rules Committee update.** The NCAA Women’s Basketball Rules Committee is considering widening the lane, moving the free throw line back and redefining the lower defensive box for upcoming rules change year. Ms. Courteau also noted that Brad Duckworth, now the director of athletics at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, was reappointed as chair of the rules committee.

e. **Review of proposed 2017 National Officiating Improvement program.** Ms. Courteau would like to add a requirement for officials to send the total number of games worked during the regular season. When nominated by a conference, the coordinator only lists the number of games that official worked for their conference. Asking the official to self-report the total number of games worked is the only way to verify their eligibility. She is also going to have the referee submit a game report after each tournament game, much like they already do during the regular season to their conference coordinator. Ms. Krah and Ms. Courteau are also working to determine a better way to let coaches know that training videos are available for their review, which keeps coaches abreast of trends during the season. Approximately 2,000 administrators viewed these videos last year, while only 200 coaches viewed the videos. Additionally, Ms. Courteau would like to add a question and answer session with a coach to the regional officiating clinics to talk about sportsmanship conduct. The committee agreed this would be a good addition to the clinics to keep the programming fresh.

11. **Future meeting schedule.** Meredith Cleaver reviewed the list of future committee teleconferences and meetings.
12. **Other business.** The committee requested access to the Synergy database to review games during the season.

13. **Adjournment.** Ms. Dawson adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

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**Committee Chair:** Chris Dawson, Pac-12 Conference  
**Staff Liaison(s):** Anucha Browne, Championships and Alliances

| Attendees: | NCAA Division I Women’s Basketball Committee  
June 12-14, 2016, Meeting |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| Rhonda Bennett, University of Nevada, Reno; Mountain West Conference.  
Shonna Brown, America East Conference.  
DeJuena Chizer, University of Houston; American Athletic Conference.  
Leslie Claybrook, Southeastern Conference.  
Chris Dawson, Pac-12 Conference.  
Terry Gawlik, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Big Ten Conference.  
Mary Ellen Gillespie, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay; Horizon League.  
M. Dianne Murphy, Columbia University; Ivy League.  
Diane Turnham, Middle Tennessee State University; Conference USA.  
Teresa Phillips, Tennessee State University; Ohio Valley Conference (via teleconference) |

| Absentees: | None. |

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| Jill Bodensteiner, University of Notre Dame; Atlantic Coast Conference.  
Sereita Cobb, espnW.  
June Courteau, National Coordinator of Officiating.  
Kate Jackson, ESPN.  
Debbie Richardson, Atlantic 10 Conference.  
Jen Rizzotti, Women’s Basketball Coaches Association.  
Lindsey Ross, ESPN.  
Tamica Smith-Jones, University of California, Riverside; Big West Conference.  
Carol Stiff, ESPN.  
Tina Thornton, ESPN.  
Coquese Washington, Women’s Basketball Coaches Association. (via teleconference) |

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<th>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</th>
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| Anucha Browne, Championships and Alliances  
Meredith Cleaver, Championships and Alliances. |
**Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:**

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<tr>
<td>Tracie Hitz</td>
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