HOW THE NCAA WORKS: Association-Wide

Each division governs its day-to-day needs, but on broad issues that affect college athletics as a whole, the NCAA Board of Governors and a collection of committees set the course for the Association.

While each NCAA division is empowered with setting its own rules and operating guidelines, some topics rise to a level of affecting college sports as a whole and need a coordinated voice to guide the Association in a unified direction. For those situations, a group of committees comprising representatives from all three divisions and making recommendations that can impact the entire Association — whether a small, private Division III school or a national champion Football Bowl Subdivision program — equally.

The Association-wide committees work collaboratively with each division’s governance bodies to recommend legislation. These committees explore issues impacting sports rules changes, the health and safety of student-athletes or opportunities for women and minority groups in college sports, and recommend changes to the appropriate legislative groups:

The NCAA Board of Governors, the highest-ranking committee in the Association, can implement policies by which all three divisions must abide. When the NCAA revised allowing schools to host championships if their state governments did not host a major sporting event, it was through a Board of Governors policy change.

Changes in legislation, however, require each division to take action. The Association-wide groups propose changes to the committees in each division, which then debate and vote on the proposals through their legislative processes.

ASSOCIATION-WIDE COMMITTEES

- Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport
- Honors Committee
- Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee
- Olympic Sports Oversight Committee
- Postgraduate Scholarship Oversight Committee
- Research Committee
- Committee on Academic and Clinical Environments
- Committee on Women’s Athletics

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is the highest-governance body in the NCAA and focuses on strategic discussions that impact the Association as a whole. The committees of voting members have the following responsibilities:

- Provides final approval of the NCAA’s budget
- Approves strategic planning for the Association as a whole
- Approves certification of institutional compliance
- Acts on behalf of the Association by adopting and implementing policies to resolve core issues and other Association-wide matters
- Initiates and settles litigation
- Commissions the NCAA Convention each year

Each division has veto power and a representative to the board, with the NCAA president serving as an ex officio member of the board. The president gets one vote on the board, and only for the purpose of breaking a tie.

VOTING BOARD MEMBERS

- Division I: President and one representative from each Division I conference
- Division II: President and one representative from each Division II conference
- Division III: President and one representative from each Division III conference

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- NCAA president

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Representatives from all three divisions sit on these Association-wide committees, which make recommendations on issues that impact the entire NCAA.

KEY

- = Experts representing fields of sport
- = Student-athlete representative
- = President or chancellor of a member school or a national champion Football Bowl Subdivision program
- = faculty athletics representative
- = Past award or scholarship recipient
- = Member school and conference executive
- = Medical doctors
- = Athletics administrators and others who work daily in college sports
- = Past award or scholarship recipient
- = Postgraduate Scholarship winner
- = Postgraduate Scholarship recipient
- = Liaison Committee member
- = Former NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship winner
- = Distinguished citizen

DIVISION I BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Conference commissioner

DIVISION II PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

- Conference commissioner

DIVISION III PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

- Conference commissioner

DI COUNCIL

- Conference commissioner

DI MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

- Conference commissioner

DIVISION III MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

- Conference commissioner

Neither the Association-wide committees nor the Board of Governors has authority to make legislation directly. But they can influence and provide guidance by recommending legislation to each division, where it can be rewritten in the division’s legislative processes.

NCAA committees study and recommend playing rules changes for sports across all three divisions. Some recommendations are reviewed by the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel, which makes final decisions on the changes. Some sports, such as golf, fencing and gymnastics, can use rules of international or national governing bodies with a waiver. NCAA modifications approved by APBA.