

## **ISSUE ONE: PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP**

### Identification of Issues

Presidents and chancellors have the ultimate responsibility within the NCAA's governance structure. They have exercised this responsibility at key times during the history of the Association and of Division III. Presidents and chancellors must be further prepared and empowered if Division III is to address successfully the issues of membership growth and diversity facing the division.

### Background

The establishment and exercise of leadership by college presidents and chancellors remains a relatively new development within the NCAA. While the Association was created in 1906, a formal structure dedicated to the participation of presidents in the NCAA governance structure did not exist until the mid-1980s. That structure, the former NCAA Presidents Commission, responded to a recommendation by the American Council on Education for greater presidential leadership within the NCAA. The commission, however, shared authority with other committees within the NCAA and did not have direct authority over the Association's budget or championships program. During the mid-1990s, the NCAA membership adopted a governance structure that vested the ultimate leadership responsibility with a board or council of presidents in each of the Association's three divisions, as well as a presidential body (the Executive Committee) to oversee Association-wide affairs. The trend toward greater presidential leadership was clearly evident in 2002 when for the first time the Executive Committee selected a sitting university president, Myles Brand, to lead the Association.

Within the Division III governance structure, presidential leadership primarily is exercised by the Presidents Council. This 15-member body has ultimate authority regarding the division's budget and nonlegislative policies. It also determines which legislative proposals will be sponsored by the governance structure for membership consideration at the Association's annual Convention. Member schools retain the ability to sponsor proposals separately, however. The division's Management Council, which reports directly to the Presidents Council, includes two presidents as full voting members, helping to assure that the deliberations of the Management Council benefit from presidential input and perspective. Presidents also serve as members on several key committees that report to the Management Council.

In 2006, the division established the Chancellors and Presidents Advisory group (PAG). The group's membership includes a representative from each conference (and group of independents) not otherwise represented on the President or Management Councils. The PAG was established to help the Presidents Council more directly and effectively engage presidents and chancellors in governance discussions at the national, conference and institutional levels.

Conferences differ significantly in the leadership authority exercised by presidents and chancellors. In 2000, the division adopted legislation to require that presidents and chancellors have the ultimate responsibility and final authority for the operation of the member conference. Beyond this minimum, presidential involvement varies in terms of meeting frequency, focus, and interaction with other key constituents (e.g., commissioner, directors of athletics, faculty athletics representatives, senior women administrators, Student-Athletes Advisory Committees). In 2006, the division adopted legislation to require conferences to conduct a comprehensive self-study at least once every five years. The self-study must include the involvement of presidents and chancellors in conference affairs. Presidential approval also is necessary for any proposed legislation submitted by member schools for consideration at the NCAA Convention. Evidence suggests, however, that presidents and chancellors may not fully understand and exercise this responsibility.

At the institutional level, reporting lines related to athletics also differ significantly. Approximately 80% of Division III athletics directors report directly to an administrator other than the presidents or chancellor—most commonly the chief officer for student affairs. While these reporting lines seemingly reflect the integration within our campus communities, they also suggest the special effort that may be necessary for presidents and chancellors to monitor and address crucial athletics issues.

In 2005, the NCAA began orientation sessions for new chancellors and presidents. These sessions, which emphasize the participation of former presidents, are conducted primarily at the NCAA Convention. The sessions are intended to help new presidents better understand how issues related to intercollegiate athletics, especially at the institutional and conference levels can affect their presidency.

The leadership exercised by Division III presidents and chancellors in the Division III legislative process has reflected both structural and practical limits. Division III (like Division II) has retained the legislative principle of "one school, one vote." While the Presidents Council has the authority to designate Convention proposals for roll call vote (to enhance institutional accountability), and to establish the order in which proposal will be considered, it has no independent authority to adopt substantive legislation, veto legislation adopted by the

membership or determine that certain legislative topics are “off limits” for a designated period of time or otherwise are subject to a legislative standard that differs from a simple majority. In addition, presidential attendance and participation during the annual Division III business session has been limited. Less than 20% of the division’s active member schools, on average have been represented by a president or chancellor during the last five NCAA Conventions. Unprecedented presidential attendance was instrumental at the 2004 Convention in the adoption of landmark reform legislation, and likewise crucial at the 2008 Convention in changing the direction of membership discussions away from structural change.

### Division III Philosophical Principles

The Division III philosophy statement contains no specific reference to the leadership expectations related to presidents and chancellors at the institutional, conference or national levels of Division III.

### Identification of Options

The survey and town hall forums, and especially the PAG meeting, explored several concepts regarding the leadership of Division III chancellors and presidents. These included:

- More direct reference to presidential involvement in the Division III philosophy statement.
- More clearly establishing leadership expectations for Division III presidents and chancellors at the campus, conference and national levels. These expectations could be established in the philosophy statement. They also could be accomplished through the establishment of greater legislative authority, especially at the conference and national levels.
- Enhanced education of new chancellors and presidents related to intercollegiate athletics.
- Changes to the Division III legislative process and convention format to better distinguish and prioritize issues of presidential interest and importance.

### Summary of Survey and Membership Feedback

Responses related to presidential leadership in the recent Division III membership survey reflected the following:

- 49% agreed or strongly agreed that presidents and chancellors should be more actively involved in the governance of the division at the national level. Another 28% somewhat agreed with that statement.
- 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the ultimate authority to decide NCAA legislative issues should rest with the president or chancellor. Another 10% somewhat agree with that statement.
- 53% agreed or strongly agreed that presidents and chancellors should be more actively involved in the governance of Division III at the conference level. Another 25% somewhat agreed with that concept.
- Regarding institutional reporting lines, the director of athletics reports most often reports directly to the chief student affairs officer (47%). The chancellor or president (18%) and the chief academic officer (17.6%) are the next most frequent reporting lines.

In addition, the PAG indicated its strong support for philosophical and legislative initiatives to enhance the leadership role of presidents and chancellors within the division.

### Recommendations for Further Consideration

- Specifically address in the philosophy statement expectations for presidential leadership and involvement at the campus, conference and national levels. Acknowledge institutional and conference autonomy and the existence of various athletics reporting lines related to this issue.
- Ensure the Institutional Self Study Guide and the Conference Self Study Guide directly address expectations regarding presidential leadership, including reporting lines and communication with key campus and conference constituents.

- Develop a best practices guide for chancellors and presidents related to presidential involvement on the campus, conference and national levels.
- Consider establishing greater legislative authority within the Division III governance structure for presidents, as well as for the Presidents Council in consultation with Presidents Advisory Group. This could include, for example, permitting the Council to designate legislative topics as dominant provisions, subject to a supermajority voting requirement. It also could include the ability to establish a legislative moratorium on specific legislative topics for specific periods of time.
- Consider establishing a separate process through which presidents can consider and decide fundamental legislative issues. This could include the targeting of issues as “presidential topics” at specific conventions, the establishment of separate voting sessions, and permitting presidents to decide priority issues via mail or electronic ballot.
- Require at least three presidents from each athletics conference, and group of independents, to attend the annual NCAA Convention. The lack of direct involvement at the Convention can contribute to legislative outcomes that are inconsistent with the recommendations of the Presidents Council and the academic mission of the division’s athletics programs.
- More actively encourage greater participation in the Association’s orientation session for new chancellors and presidents.
- Partner with higher education associations to present programming related to intercollegiate athletics at existing meetings, especially in conjunction with existing leadership development programs.