

White Paper Series: Key Issues Related to the Growth of Division III

Summary of Background and Recommendations

During the last three years, the growth of Division III has been a focal point for the NCAA's governance structure and membership. The division has added 120 members since 1990; current active membership is 429 and is expected to grow to 464 by 2016 with the potential for 480 members by 2020. As the division has grown, its membership has become more diverse in terms of sports sponsorship, enrollment, institutional mission, academic offerings and legislative perspectives.

Results of a February 2008 membership survey clearly indicated a lack of support for any structural change to Division III to address this growth. Discussions are now focused on addressing the growth and diversity of the division within the structural framework of Division III.

As part of its active plan to address future challenges, the Division III Presidents Council and Presidents Advisory Group (PAG) has led a series of discussions to achieve a new level of excellence as the division evolves during the next decade. This effort began with Town Hall Forums conducted in the spring and summer of 2008.

The effort continued with a series of nine presidentially authored White Papers, distributed in September. The first two White Papers highlight the priority issues of presidential leadership and the importance of the Division III philosophy and identity. The remaining seven papers address financial aid standards, Division II as a possible membership destination, sports sponsorship and membership requirements, playing seasons, academic considerations, championships, and budget priorities and dues structure. The Presidents Council's goal for the White Papers is to better inform the membership regarding these issues and to establish the agenda and framework for the division to manage its growth and enhance the student-athlete experience.

This following document includes a summary of each issue identified in the White Papers, including background, recommendations for further consideration, governance structure oversight, priority, timeline and status. It is important to note that these recommendations are preliminary, and will evolve. Ultimately, the recommendations will provide the focus of the division's governance agenda for several years to come. Membership feedback, beginning with the Division III Presidents Issues Forum at the 2009 Convention, is critical to this effort.

WHITE PAPER ONE- PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

Background:

- * NCAA has established greater emphasis on presidential leadership since federation in 1997.
- * The Division III Philosophy Statement is currently silent on the issue of presidential leadership.
- * Division III membership survey indicates that only 20% of Division III athletics directors report directly to a president or chancellor.
- * The Presidents Council and PAG desire a greater strategic role for presidents in divisional governance, with less emphasis on operational details.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
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.	Presidents Council, PAG	1	2010 Convention	
Consider establishing greater strategic focus and legislative authority within the Division III governance structure for presidents, as well as for the Presidents Council in consultation with PAG. This could include, for example, permitting the Council to designate fundamental legislative topics as dominant provisions, subject to a two-thirds majority voting requirement. It also could include the ability to establish a legislative moratorium on specific legislative topics for specific periods of time. Such changes to the legislative process would require a membership vote to enact. These initiatives could be linked to a commitment to delegate to the Management Council and governance structure greater responsibility for operational details.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Interpretations and Legislation Committee (ILC)	1	2011 Convention	

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
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.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, ILC	1	2011 Convention	
Require at least three presidents from each athletics conference, and group of independents, to attend the annual NCAA Convention.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Membership Committee	2	2011 Convention	
Develop a best practices guide for chancellors and presidents related to presidential involvement on the campus, conference and national levels.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council	2	2011-12	
More actively encourage greater participation in the Association’s orientation session for new chancellors and presidents.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Membership Committee	3	For participation in the 2009-10 year and beyond	
Partner with higher education associations to present programming related to intercollegiate athletics at existing meetings, especially in conjunction with existing leadership development programs.	Presidents Council, PAG	3	2010-11 and beyond	
Ensure the Institutional Self Study Guide and the Conference Self Study Guide directly addresses expectations regarding presidential leadership, including reporting lines and communication with key campus and conference constituents.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Membership Committee	3	2010-11 Self Study Guide Publications	

WHITE PAPER TWO- THE PHILOSOPHY AND IDENTITY OF DIVISION III

Background:

- * The Division III Philosophy Statement was adopted in 1983 based on practices and ideas existing at that time.
- * Division III has been engaged in a broad review of its philosophy and related legislative standards for several years, beginning with the surveys and research done for the 2004 “reform package”.
- * With the conclusion of the discussion to change the division’s structure, there is a need to reexamine the philosophy, develop a shared understanding of what it means, and recommit to it to ensure the division’s legislation and policies are consistent with the philosophy.
- * Division III represents more than a group of institutions aligned around the concept of not awarding athletically related financial aid. The division has the opportunity to define a distinct philosophy that emphasizes the educational value of the holistic student experience, which is unique to American higher education.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Consistent with the rationale described in White Paper No. 1, include in the philosophy statement a specific expectation for active presidential leadership related to the Division III athletics programs at the institutional, conference and national levels.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council	1	2010 Convention	
Undertake a comprehensive educational effort related to the philosophy statement. There is lack of understanding for the tenets of the philosophy statement, beyond the prohibition on the awarding of athletics aid. Membership growth and diversity make it increasingly important for the membership to understand and commit to all tenets of the statement.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Strategic Planning and Finance Committee (SPFC), Membership Committee	1	2010-11 and beyond	
Initiate a comprehensive effort to define and promote the Division III identity. The effort should use appropriate expertise to emphasize the division's holistic educational approach and the integration of athletics into the educational experience of the division’s student-athletes. The study and its recommendations should be research based.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, SPFC	1	Initiate the project in 2009; project expected to be multiple years in duration.	

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Create an identity for Division III as a conscious alternative to the sport-specialization culture, and as an accessible and fulfilling educational and athletics destination. Emphasize a fuller, more integrated academic experience as the primary goal and consideration in all divisional endeavors.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, SPFC	1	Initiate the project in 2009; project expected to be multiple years in duration.	
Consider specific steps to educate governing boards regarding the division's philosophy, related institutional commitments, and presidential expectations.	Presidents Council, PAG, Membership Committee	2	2010-11 and beyond	
Give the Division III Philosophy Statement more prominent emphasis in the Division III Manual.	ILC	3	2009-10 manual	

WHITE PAPER THREE- DIVISION III FINANCIAL AID STANDARDS

Background:

- * The Division III prohibition on athletically related financial aid is the most publicly recognized tenet of the Division III philosophy.
- * 2008 membership survey results indicated that two-thirds of responding institutions are willing to explore the consideration of athletics leadership in financial aid awards provided it is consistent with the consideration of leadership in other student activities.
- * The Division III Financial Aid Committee has spent considerable time studying the possibility of permitting institutions to award financial aid based on athletics leadership, but has not been successful in developing a means to delineate these leadership awards from athletically related financial aid.
- * The August PAG meeting included a resounding endorsement of the division’s current prohibition on the consideration of athletics leadership in financial aid awards. The group noted that allowing such aid would open the door to athletics scholarships as leadership is defined too broadly in secondary schools, and would adversely affect the identity of the division.
- * The Presidents Council concluded that current philosophical tenets, legislative standards and programs related to Division III financial aid should be retained and strengthened.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Designate significant financial aid regulations as division dominant, which thus require a two-thirds majority vote to amend.	Presidents Council, Management Council, Financial Aid Committee, ILC	2	2011 Convention	

WHITE PAPER FOUR- DIVISION II AS A POSSIBLE MEMBERSHIP DESTINATION

Background:

- * New entrants to the NCAA should make the decision of divisional affiliation based on shared philosophy rather than examining only perceived financial considerations.
- * It is believed that many institutions do not understand the true costs and benefits of Division II or III membership, which have different membership requirements and philosophical platforms.
- * The NCAA holds a responsibility to clearly articulate for existing and potential members the values and expectations of each division.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Require the use of the Division II financial aid simulation tool or other similar exercise as part of the Division III exploratory membership program.	Division II and III Membership Committees	2	2009-10	Exploratory membership program
Enhance the NCAA Web site to permit existing and potential members to more clearly and directly compare and contrast the philosophies and legislative requirements of Divisions II and III, as well as related membership profiles (e.g., average and ranges for enrollment, sport sponsorship, budgets, geographic location, etc.)	Division II and III Membership Committees, Division I Membership Subcommittee	3	2009-10	
Include educational programming related to membership at the annual rules seminars and/or Convention.	Division III Membership Committee	3	2010-11	
Conduct periodic joint meetings of the Divisions II and III Membership Committees.	Division II and III Membership Committees	3	Biannual, beginning in 2010-11	

WHITE PAPER FIVE- SPORTS SPONSORSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Background:

- * Average sports sponsorship in Division III is 16.7 sports per institution, but is 13.2 sports per institution for those that have joined since 1990.
- * In 2006, the division voted to increase its sports sponsorship requirements to 12 sports for institutions with more than 1000 students, citing its broad-based program philosophy.
- * 2006 Convention legislation also included enhancements to the list of conditions and obligations of membership, all of which carry the same penalty structure and 10 year horizon (summarized as a “three strike” system where benefits of membership are impacted on strike two).

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Implement the increased sport sponsorship requirements slated for 2010-11, consistent with the “broad-based program” philosophy.	Division III Membership Committee	N/A (effort underway for 2010 implementation)	2010-11	Already approved at 2006 Convention. Could be changed at 2010 Convention.
Pursue technology through which institutions and conferences may fulfill educational obligations of membership.	Division III Membership Committee	2	2009-10	
Review the current conditions and obligations of membership to determine what requirements are most appropriate for the division, and whether specific activities or commitments should be added to or removed from the current list.	Division III Membership Committee	2	2009-10	
Amend the membership penalty structure and timetable to better distinguish requirements and related penalties, giving top priority to the fulfillment of sports sponsorship requirements.	Division III Membership Committee	2	2011 Convention	

WHITE PAPER SIX- PREFERENCE FOR CURRENT PLAYING SEASON STANDARDS

Background:

- * Other than the amount of competition permitted in the nontraditional segment, the 2004 reductions to the playing and practice season were widely endorsed in the 2008 membership survey.
- * The Division III philosophy limits playing and practice seasons in order to foster an environment which develops well-rounded, academically successful student-athletes with a desirable balance of academics, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- * The philosophical tenet touting a maximization of the number and variety of athletics opportunities for students has historically been misunderstood; its application applies to maximizing competitive opportunities available to the entire student body rather than maximizing the competitive experience of individual student-athletes.

Identification of Options	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Solidify the division’s position on playing season length by amending the philosophy statement to clarify its intent, and amend the statement to enumerate a commitment to supporting a student-athletes’ right to meaningful participation in non-athletic pursuits as a method of enriching the overall educational experience.	Presidents Council, Management Council, Playing and Practice Seasons Subcommittee (PPS)	2	2011 Convention	
Establish key playing season legislation (such as extensions of the playing season) as division dominant, thus requiring a two-thirds majority vote to amend.	Presidents Council, Management Council, PPS, ILC	2	2011 Convention	
Engage in a more thorough review of the appropriate amount of competition permitted in the nontraditional segment.	PPS	3	2010-11	See 2009 Convention Proposal No. 3

WHITE PAPER SEVEN- ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Background:

- * Division III student-athletes primarily focus on a four-year, undergraduate experience.
- * Division III values institutional autonomy in the areas of initial and continuing eligibility standards.
- * The Division III Philosophy Statement notes that the highest priority shall be placed on the overall quality of the educational experience and successful completion of academic programs; athletics is integral to the education process; and student-athletes should maintain academic performance at a level comparable to their peers in the student-body.
- * Similar to the financial aid reporting process, any potential academic reporting system could compare the academic performance of student-athletes to other students at the institution and could be derived from information already reported to the federal government. Further, the results could provide the division with a positive opportunity to strengthen the Division III identity.
- * The redshirting prohibition established in 2004 was widely endorsed in the 2008 membership survey, yet segments of the division continue to express concern regarding this legislative standard.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Amend the philosophy statement to emphasize that Division III athletics are primarily focused on the undergraduate educational experience in a four-year time frame.	Presidents Council, Management Council, Academic Issues Subcommittee, Membership Committee, SPFC	2	2011 Convention	
National initial and continuing eligibility standards do not appear to be necessary or supported. Clarify that this topic is not under active consideration. Amend the philosophy statement to clarify that such standards are best left to institutional and conference autonomy.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, ILC	2	2009-10; 2011 Convention	
Encourage conferences to actively monitor and review the initial eligibility and continuing academic progress of student-athletes vs. the general student body.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, SPFC	2	2010-11	

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Actively monitor the progress of the College Sports Project's pilot reporting program and consider the experience and results of program participants in the consideration of a further, division-wide policy initiative.	Presidents Council, Management Council, Research Committee	2	Ongoing	
Explore the establishment of aggregate "dashboard" indicators (e.g., grade-point averages, class rank, persistence and graduation rates), which would permit a school to compare institutional data with aggregate data from selected institutions of interest.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Research Committee, SPFC	2	2011-12	
Consider the limited reporting of student-athlete academic performance, in conjunction with student data currently provided annually to the Department of Education. The program would emphasize the comparison of student-athlete and nonstudent-athlete data within institutions, not between institutions, similar to the current financial aid reporting process.	Presidents Council, PAG, Management Council, Research Committee, SPFC	2	2011 Convention	
Assign the reporting process a prominent role related to any Division III identity effort, consistent with the division's academic identity and its philosophical tenet that the academic performance of student-athletes is consistent with that of the general student body.	Presidents Council, Management Council, SPFC	2	2011-12	
Modify legislative procedure to require a division-dominant (two-thirds majority) vote to amend the redshirting prohibition.	Presidents Council, Management Council, ILC	2	2011 Convention	

WHITE PAPER EIGHT- DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS

Background:

- * In team sports, the division has established a three week limit on the length of championships (other than football), which can accommodate 64 teams.
- * The division has legislatively established an access ratio of 1:6.5, which can accommodate approximately 416 sponsoring schools.
- * The division is projected to grow to 464 schools by 2016, and 480 schools by 2020. Continued growth means the division will be unable to honor its 1:6.5 access ratio and still maintain the three-week, 64-team limits.
- * While the Division III Philosophy notes that primary emphasis shall be placed on regular season competition, the division also values the national championship experience.
- * Automatic Qualification is a highly valued benefit to member conferences. As the number of Division III multi-sport conferences continues to grow, at-large access to championships will decrease.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Establish related sports sponsorship projections, and corresponding bracket enhancement timetables, as appropriate to accommodate projected growth in both team and individual sports, through 2020.	Championships Committee	2	2009-10	
Change the access ratio policies, as necessary, to limit the championships field in team sports to 64.	Championships Committee	2	2011 Convention	
Emphasize the quality of the student-athlete experience as a priority in future championships discussions.	Championships Committee	N/A (effort underway)	Ongoing	

WHITE PAPER NINE- BUDGET PRIORITIES AND DUES STRUCTURE

Background:

- * 90% of the NCAA’s revenues come from its broadcast agreements, set to expire in 2013, with the final three years at the NCAA’s option. The nature and value of future contracts is not certain. The current contract includes an annual growth rate of 7%.
- * Division III has a constitutional guarantee to receive 3.18% of the NCAA’s revenues to run its programs (national office staff and governance activities are funded from a separate, Association-wide, budget.) As a constitutional article, changing this figure would necessitate a vote of all three divisions, which is unlikely.
- * The Division III budget for 2008-09 is roughly \$20 million dollars and the division has a funding principle to allocate at least 25% of the budget to nonchampionships initiatives.
- * The Division III reserve is currently \$11 million and is expected to remain stable throughout the current budget biennium, noting that uncertainties in the championships travel budget may impact the reserve.
- * Division III dues have been \$900 since 1985. These monies are part of the NCAA revenue stream and are subject to constitutional revenue allocations (i.e., 3.18% of all division’s dues go directly back to Division III programming.)

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Maintain the current Division III reserve (approximately \$11 million) to ensure the future of key programs and services in uncertain economic climate.	Presidents and Management Councils, SPFC	N/A (effort underway)	Ongoing	
Continue efforts to identify and meet membership needs. The division should establish greater control over its own financial future to mitigate uncertainty in future broadcast agreements.	Presidents and Management Councils, SPFC	2	Ongoing	
Develop enhanced revenue streams in the form of a dues increase. New dues revenue should be targeted to directly support divisional needs.	Presidents and Management Councils, SPFC	2	2011 Convention	Any increase should directly support divisional programs and services.

Recommendations for further consideration	Governance Structure Oversight	Recommended Priority Level	Estimated Timeline	Status or comments
Consider conference certification fees to ensure that adequate resources are available to new conferences, which have enhanced expectations as they become intermediaries between the national office and the member institutions.	Presidents and Management Councils , SPFC	3	2011 Convention	
Establish increased dues for newer members (on a declining scale from the provisional status assessment toward the eventual regular dues) to support the additional engagement of national office staff with newer members.	Presidents and Management Councils, Membership Committee, SPFC	3	2011 Convention	