

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I ACADEMIC CABINET
SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2011, MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

- **Review of NCAA Division I Academic Eligibility Requirements for Prospective Student-Athletes.** The NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet discussed possible changes to the initial-eligibility requirements and forwarded recommended increased standards to the NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance for their review.

Additionally, the cabinet reviewed legislation it sponsored regarding two-year college transfer requirements and proposed that the implementation timeline be accelerated by one year.

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative Items.

- None

2. Nonlegislative Items.

- None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Legislative.

a. Amendments to Proposals Sponsored by the Academic Cabinet.

- (1) **NCAA Proposal No. 2011-44 -- Recruiting -- Letter-Of-Intent Programs, Financial Aid Agreements -- Submission of Transcript to Eligibility Center Before Signing.** The cabinet reviewed a request from the NCAA Eligibility Center and agreed to amend the proposal to eliminate the exception for home-schooled prospective student-athletes.
- (2) **Proposal No. 2011-65 – Eligibility – Two-Year College Transfers – Year of Academic Readiness at Two-Year College.** The cabinet reviewed the current proposed effective date of August 1, 2013, for student-athletes initially enrolling full time at a collegiate institution on or

after August 1, 2013, and agreed to amend to August 1, 2012, for student-athletes initially enrolling full time at a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2012. The cabinet noted that August 2012 provides adequate time for the two-year community and the NCAA to develop any appropriate mechanisms and potential legislative changes at the two-year college level to adequately implement the year of academic readiness.

- (3) **Proposal No. 2011-69 – Eligibility – Transfer Regulations – 2-4 and 4-2-4 College Transfers.** The cabinet reviewed the current proposed effective date of August 1, 2013, for student-athletes initially enrolling full time at a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2013, and agreed to amend to August 1, 2012, for student-athletes initially enrolling full time in a two-year collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2012. The cabinet noted that adequate education after legislative adoption for student-athletes, the two-year college community and the NCAA membership before a student-athlete enters a two-year institution and is subject to the increased standards is achievable based on current adoption timelines and that no student-athlete currently enrolled in a two-year collegiate institution will be impacted.
- (4) **Proposal No. 2011-70 -- Eligibility and Committees -- 2-4 and 4-2-4 Transfers -- Waivers -- Progress-Toward-Degree Waivers Committee.** The cabinet reviewed the current proposed effective date of August 1, 2012, and agreed to amend to April 1, 2012. The cabinet noted that this effective date provides adequate time for the waiver subcommittee to be in place and establish guidelines and directives prior to any new legislation taking effect regarding the recommended revised effective dates for Proposal Nos. 2011-65 and 2011-69.

b. Comments on Proposals to be Initially Considered by the NCAA Division I Legislative Council January 2012.

- (1) **Proposal No. 2011-26 -- Amateurism, Recruiting, Eligibility and Awards, Benefits and Expenses -- World University Championships.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2011-26, which would specify that the World University Championships be included in all bylaws that apply to the World University Games. The cabinet noted that several sports are not included in the World University Games. The cabinet noted that the inclusion of the World University Championships in all bylaws that apply to the World University Games would provide student-athletes participating in baseball, softball, cross country and women's equestrian

the same opportunities and benefits as student-athletes who participate in the World University Games.

- (2) **Proposal No. 2011-63 -- Eligibility -- General Eligibility Requirements -- Graduate Student/Postbaccalaureate Participation -- Postseason Event Following Last Term of Eligibility.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2011-63, which would specify that a student-athlete who is eligible during the term in which degree work is completed (or is eligible as a graduate) remains eligible for any postseason event that begins within 60 days after the end of the term in which the student completes the requirements for the degree (or graduate eligibility). The cabinet noted that a deserving student-athlete should remain eligible to participate in any postseason event for which the institution qualifies.
- (3) **Proposal No. 2011-64 -- Eligibility -- Seasons of Competition: Five-Year Rule -- Five Seasons of Eligibility -- Football.** The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2011-64, which would specify that in football, a student-athlete shall not engage in more than five seasons of intercollegiate competition and may only engage in a fifth season at an institution at which the student-athlete previously used a season of competition. The cabinet noted that additional research and analysis are needed regarding the concept of five seasons of eligibility.
- (4) **Proposal No. 2011-66 -- Eligibility -- Seasons of Competition -- Minimum Amount of Competition -- Exception -- Nonchampionship Segment Competition -- Softball.** The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2011-66, which would specify that in softball, a student-athlete may compete in an institution's nonchampionship segment, under specified conditions, without using a season of competition. The cabinet recommends that the sponsor modify Proposal No. 2011-66 to specify that in all sports for which there is a segment of the playing seasons that does not conclude with an NCAA championship, a student-athlete may compete in an institution's nonchampionship segment, under specified conditions, without using a season of competition. The cabinet would support the proposal if modified.
- (5) **Proposal No. 2011-67 -- Eligibility -- Freshman Academic Requirements -- Advanced Placement - International Certification.** The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2011-67, which would specify that, for purposes of fulfilling the advanced placement requirements for initial eligibility, a "similar proficiency examination" must be an advanced or higher level, nationally administered proficiency exam with a uniform

grading scale that is taken after high school graduation; further, to specify that an institution shall use the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine the initial eligibility of an international student-athlete pursuant to the advanced placement criteria. The cabinet did not see a compelling reason to legislate the definition of a “similar proficiency examination” at this time. The cabinet noted the benefit of continuing to afford institutions the ability to determine the initial eligibility of an international student-athlete who presents a “similar proficiency examination.”

- (6) **Proposal No. 2011-68 -- Eligibility -- Progress-Toward-Degree Requirements -- Eligibility for Competition -- Fulfillment of Credit-Hour Requirements -- Additional Requirements -- Football -- Exception -- Team Academic Progress Rate.** The cabinet opposes Proposal No. 2011-68, which would specify that in football, a student-athlete shall not be subject to the eligibility penalty for failure to successfully complete at least nine-semester hours or eight-quarter hours during the fall term and earn the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) eligibility point for the fall term, provided the institution’s APR for football is 965 or higher. The cabinet noted the importance of maintaining a level of ineligibility as a means to facilitate behavior change during the fall term.
- (7) **Proposal No. 2011-71 -- Eligibility -- Transfer Regulations -- Four-Year College Transfers -- One-Time Transfer Exception -- Women’s Ice Hockey.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2011-71, which would specify that the one-time transfer exception to the four-year transfer residence requirement would not be applicable to student-athletes in women’s ice hockey. The cabinet noted that men’s ice hockey student-athletes are currently precluded from using the one-time transfer exception. Further, the cabinet noted that three of the four women’s ice hockey conferences have adopted similar intra-conference transfer rules whereby student-athletes that transfer within the conference must spend a year in residence prior to being eligible to compete.
- (8) **Proposal No. 2011-72 -- Eligibility -- Outside Competition -- Exception -- USA Fencing National Championship.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2011-72, which would specify that in fencing, a student-athlete may compete during the academic year as a member of a USA Fencing member club team at the USA Fencing National Championships. The cabinet noted that the event has been moved from July to April to accommodate the Pan American Zonal Championships, the Olympics or other international competition. The cabinet noted that many student-

athletes may not be able to attend the USA Fencing National Championships if they are not permitted to compete on behalf of their USA Fencing club teams due to the cost of participating on an individual basis.

- (9) **Proposal No. 2011-74 - Financial Aid -- Summer Financial Aid -- Enrolled Student-Athletes -- Proportionality Restriction -- Exhausted Eligibility Exception.** The cabinet supports Proposal No. 2011-74, which would specify that the summer aid proportionality restriction shall not apply to a student-athlete who has exhausted his or her eligibility and is enrolled in coursework acceptable toward his or her degree requirements. The cabinet noted that the legislative change would promote student-athlete well-being by providing an additional opportunity for a student-athlete to receive the maximum allowable athletics aid and expedite degree completion.
- (10) **Proposal No. 2011-81 - Awards, Benefits and Expenses -- Other Travel Expenses Provided by the Institution -- Conference-Sponsored Life Skills Program.** The cabinet supports Proposal 2011-81, which would permit an institution or conference to pay actual and necessary expenses for a student-athlete to attend a conference-sponsored life skills program (e.g., leadership, personal development, conflict resolution). The cabinet noted the importance of providing more student-athletes with the opportunity to attend life skills programs that support student development initiatives and enhance the quality of the student-athlete experience.

2. Nonlegislative.

- a. **Review of Division I Initial-Eligibility Requirements and Recommended Changes.** The cabinet continued its review of initial-eligibility standards and examined additional research regarding the high school academic profiles and college academic outcomes of student-athletes. Guided by the research and previously articulated principles, the cabinet recommends increases to the initial-eligibility standards. The cabinet's recommendations include a tiered structure that provides for athletically related financial aid and practice at one set of academic standards, and establishes a more rigorous academic standard to be eligible for competition.

The cabinet forwarded to the Committee on Academic Performance two models for consideration. In both models, the cabinet recommends that the standard for athletically related financial aid and practice be the same:

- (1) **Financial Aid.** In order to receive athletically related financial aid during a student-athlete's initial year of collegiate enrollment, the student-athlete must meet a minimum combination of core-course grade-point average and ACT/SAT score as defined by the current initial-eligibility sliding scale. In addition, the cabinet recommends increasing the minimum core-course grade-point average from 2.000 to 2.300 for receipt of athletically related financial aid.
- (2) **Practice.** In order to be eligible for practice in the first regular academic full-time term of collegiate enrollment, the student-athlete must meet a minimum combination of core-course grade-point average and ACT/SAT score as defined by the current initial-eligibility sliding scale. In addition, the cabinet recommends increasing the minimum core-course grade-point average from 2.000 to 2.300 for eligibility for practice during the first regular academic full-time term of collegiate enrollment. In order to be eligible for practice during subsequent terms of the initial year of collegiate enrollment, a student-athlete must pass nine semester hours or eight quarter hours of degree-applicable credit in his or her first regular full-time term of collegiate enrollment.
- (3) **Competition.** More rigorous academic preparation is recommended to be eligible for competition immediately when entering as a first-year student-athlete. Two alternative models for delineating those student-athletes who would benefit from an academic redshirt year were examined and supported by the cabinet. The models differ only in the level of academic preparation deemed appropriate for managing academics and athletics competition during the first year. Both models propose using a sliding scale of core-course grade-point average and ACT/SAT score similar to that used for athletically related financial aid and practice, but set at a more rigorous academic level. For any given test score a student-athlete will need to have earned a higher core-course grade-point-average than the current standard in order to be eligible for competition in his or her initial year of full time collegiate enrollment.
 - (a) **Model One.** Creates a sliding scale combination of core-course grade-point average and ACT/SAT scores that translates to needing a core-course grade-point average that is about one quarter of a grade point higher for any given test score. As an

example, a student-athlete with an 820 SAT score would need a 2.750 core-course grade-point average for competition (compared to a 2.500 needed currently). The student-athlete with the 820 SAT and a core-course grade-point average between 2.500 and 2.750 would still be eligible for athletically related financial aid and practice, but not for competition. A student-athlete with a core-course grade-point average below 2.300 would be ineligible for competition during his or her first year of initial collegiate enrollment regardless of ACT/SAT score.

- (b) **Model Two.** Creates a sliding scale combination of core-course grade-point average and ACT/SAT scores that translates to needing a core-course grade-point average that is about one half of a grade point higher for any given test score. As an example, a student-athlete with an 820 SAT score would need roughly a 3.000 core-course grade-point average for competition (compared to a 2.500 needed currently). The student-athlete with the 820 SAT and a core-course grade-point average between 2.500 and 3.000 would still be eligible for athletically related financial aid and practice, but not for competition. A student-athlete with a core-course grade-point average below 2.300 would be ineligible for competition during his or her first year of collegiate enrollment regardless of ACT/SAT score.

The cabinet expressed preference for the more academically rigorous competition standard, Model Two. This model best shifts expectations for competition eligibility, essentially assuming ineligibility in the initial year of collegiate enrollment unless a student-athlete's academic record clearly identifies the student-athlete as being prepared to succeed academically.

The cabinet recommends an effective date of August 1, 2015, for student-athletes first entering a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2015, to effectuate proper notice of the recommended increased standards.

In addition to the proposed changes noted above, the cabinet recommended enhancing the current process of determining obvious academic qualifiers after six semesters of high school by recalibrating core-course grade-point average, ACT/SAT and core-course distribution requirements to work in concert with the modified initial-eligibility standards.

Finally, the cabinet discussed the option of prescribing metrics for core-course completion in high school (e.g., completion of 10 core courses prior to the start of

a student-athlete's seventh semester of high school). The cabinet did not recommend at this time setting additional requirements for the timing of core courses beyond what is currently required. Specifically, the cabinet was concerned about advising issues at the high school level and believed that given the significance of the other recommendations, a prescription on core-course timing may not be warranted.

- b. Appointment of Division I Progress-Toward-Degree Committee Chair.** The cabinet approved the appointment of Daniel McCarthy (University of South Alabama) as chair of the committee, replacing Jody Sykes (University of Louisville).
- c. Progress-Toward-Degree Standards Review.** The cabinet had a preliminary discussion to identify areas of potential review in this area. The cabinet will discuss potential increases to the progress-toward-degree standards during its February meeting.

Committee Chair: Herman Holt, Jr., University of North Carolina, Asheville, Big South Conference

*Cabinet Liaisons: Diane Dickman, Academic and Membership Affairs
Alex Smith, Academic and Membership Affairs
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