Facilitating Learning and Achieving Graduation

A Report Prepared for the NCAA Division I Membership
February 2009

"Student-athletes are students first and should have every opportunity to gain an education and to participate in campus life."
- The Second-Century Imperatives, 2006

For the last several years, NCAA Division I institutions have engaged in a dramatic cycle of academic reform with the expressed goal of increasing student-athlete graduation rates. Through a series of changes including revised academic eligibility requirements, new performance metrics, and significant penalties, the Division I membership has attempted not only to set higher performance standards, but also to bring about cultural changes necessary to achieve greater student-athlete graduation success. Several constituents have noted the significance of this endeavor, including the NCAA Division I Board of Directors and the NCAA Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics. Both groups have specifically noted the importance of increasing the effectiveness of academic support efforts to ensure success across all student-athlete subpopulations. The Presidential Task Force was particularly emphatic in its call for attention to issues surrounding special admissions, academic risk of student-athletes and the nature of support provided to those who experience challenges to persistence and degree completion. While the presidents applauded the academic reform efforts of the current cycle, they strongly urged continued attention to the changes necessary to institutionalize the cultural shift beginning to emerge as a result of the initial efforts.

In response to The Second-Century Imperatives, a report issued in October 2006 by the Presidential Task Force, a working group was appointed to examine issues pertaining to the academic risk of student-athletes. See Appendix C for a list of working group members. Specifically, the working group was charged to:

1. Identify factors and characteristics that may cause a student-athlete to be "at risk" of not graduating from his or her institution;

2. Establish a data-based definition of "at risk" that allows for local differences among the diverse Division I membership;

3. Develop a tool for campuses to use to examine special admissions of scholarship student-athletes and to measure whether campus systems can adequately support the number of student-athletes admitted via special admissions review each year;

4. Identify model practices in academic and life-skills programs to support "at-risk" student-athletes in their academic endeavors; and

5. Develop mechanisms to assist institutions in evaluating the level of academic and life-skills support provided to "at-risk" student-athletes and in determining if changes or enhancements are necessary.
To fulfill its charge, the working group met four times from February 2008 to January 2009 and devised a management system designed to assist campuses in identifying, assessing and mitigating risk for all student-athletes. A final report was submitted to the NCAA Division I Academic Cabinet in February 2009 and the Academic Cabinet endorsed the system with a few modifications. The results of these efforts are outlined in this report.

**The Nature of "Risk"**

The working group began its work by conceptualizing "risk" to include all factors that can reduce a student-athlete's chances of graduating from an institution, rather than limiting its review to academic factors. Further, the group asserted that every student has some degree of risk of not graduating until the time that he or she actually completes all graduation requirements. As a result, throughout their collegiate careers student-athletes are on a risk continuum determined by factors that often fall into three main categories:

1. Factors that may be inherent to the student at the time of entry into a member institution (e.g., academic preparation, two- or four-year transfer status, academic motivation and effort, socioeconomic status, first-generation college student);

2. Factors that may be inherent to the student-athlete's institution, program or sports team (e.g., sport time demands, academic support programming); and

3. Factors that arise during a student-athlete's collegiate career (e.g., academic ineligibility, personal issues, actual or perceived opportunities to pursue a professional sports career, coaching change, exhaustion of athletics eligibility).

Although individual risk factors may be readily identified, research in a number of areas (e.g., developmental psychology) has shown that many adverse outcomes are related most strongly to an accumulation of risk factors from a larger universe of factors. Modeling individual versus cumulative risk is statistically straightforward if data are available on each factor. Another framework commonly employed for studying risk uses a sequential approach to developing risk profiles. The key for this approach is that the same risk factor may have very different meanings contingent on other characteristics of the person (e.g., impact of sport time demands may differ as a function of a student's academic preparation in high school). In addition, some risk factors may be closely tied to the student-athlete (e.g., current academic abilities), while others may be related more distantly (e.g., university's policy on scheduling competitions during final exams) but impact the student-athlete all the same through proximal processes (e.g., disrupting a studying routine). Appropriate consideration needs to be given to both types of risk factors. Finally, risk factors may be stable over time (e.g., socioeconomic status) or dynamic during college (e.g., academic motivation). They even may fluctuate during the course of the academic year (e.g., academic effort in season versus out of season).
Consistent with this notion, a student-athlete's individual risk level may fluctuate from low risk to high risk due to the development or mitigation of various risk factors. This work presents a paradigm shift, as "at risk" often is used to categorize a group of students who are academically underprepared at the point of entry into the collegiate environment. However, research regarding student-athlete graduation success indicates that other nonacademic factors, some of which develop after the student-athlete has enrolled in college, present significant threats to a student-athlete's likelihood of persistence to graduation. Further, the stigma that sometimes can be attached to students labeled "at risk" can be detrimental and care should be taken when assigning labels or categories. It has been asserted that a system that assesses and recommends support for each student-athlete, regardless of his or her level of cumulative risk, will facilitate the success of all student-athletes, while helping to minimize negative perceptions regarding student-athletes who present a higher risk of not graduating.

**Facilitating Learning and Achieving Graduation**

The working group, Academic Cabinet and Board of Directors have endorsed the development of a system that will assist institutions in assessing risk and in supporting all student-athletes in pursuit of their college degrees. This electronic program will be called "FLAG", which stands for Facilitating Learning and Achieving Graduation. FLAG has been designed to help institutions optimize their respective campus environments to leverage opportunities for graduation success. In so doing, FLAG will provide tools for institutions to increase the efficiency of their current services (including academic support and life-skills programs) and to make informed decisions regarding recruiting, admissions and program resources (e.g., staffing and budget). Implementation of the FLAG system will address each of the points of the original working group's charge by providing three modules:

1. One for assessing individual student-athlete risk;

2. One for assigning suggested support services, based on the student-athlete's specific risk factors; and,

3. One for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the institution's student-athlete support services.
FIGURE 1: The FLAG Modules

Graduation Risk Overview (GRO)
Scoring model by which each student-athlete can be evaluated, based on data-driven risk factors.

Support Services
Activities designed to counter the risk factors presented by each student-athlete.

Evaluation of Support Services and Programs
Determines the effectiveness of campus units in mitigating risk factors presented by student-athletes collectively.

FLAG will be a Web-based system integrated into an existing NCAA platform [i.e., NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) Improvement Plan] to provide accessibility and familiarity for campus users. In addition, the program will use as many existing data sources as possible in order to minimize the need for additional data entry. For example, student-athlete academic profiles should be able to migrate from the APR Improvement Plan into FLAG so campuses only have to enter basic data one time.

GRADUATION RISK OVERVIEW

The Graduation Risk Overview (GRO) is a scored metric that provides a dynamic quantification of an individual student-athlete's potential barriers to graduation. GRO weights a number of factors judged to have the greatest impact on a student-athlete's likelihood of graduation success. When incoming and continuing student-athletes are evaluated against the identified factors, a statistical measure of individual risk is calculated. In addition, GRO allows for institutions to factor in local differences and to incorporate risk factors applicable to their respective student
populations. It is useful for all campuses, regardless of institutional mission, student demographics, geographical location or levels of resources available. This data-driven cumulative-risk model was developed after an examination of over 50 academic and nonacademic risk variables identified for testing by the working group. Based on a thorough review, the risk factors were narrowed to include variables within five categories, including:

1. Academic;
2. Role of academics (in the student-athlete's life);
3. Transfer status;
4. Personal history; and
5. Sport.

A student-athlete's risk can be classified as low, medium, or high based on the number and nature of risk factors presented. For optimal results, each individual student-athlete should be evaluated first as a recruit or incoming freshman or transfer, and then at least once per academic year throughout his or her collegiate career. Please refer to the following section for a complete explanation of the GRO models, including a list of the weighted variables within each category and the rationale supporting the inclusion of each variable within the GRO assessment.

**GRO Technical Specifications**

GRO is a research-based method for quantifying risk factors predictive of a Division I student-athlete's failure to reach the goal of college graduation at his or her current institution. The two formulas comprising GRO were developed based on analyses of national data on student-athlete academic trajectories collected by the NCAA research staff over a 15-year period. The formulas are intended to highlight factors that tend to relate to student-level risk across Division I institutions nationally, while providing appropriate flexibility to account for differences among colleges, allowing schools to include well researched local risk factors in the model, and maintaining a generally comparable metric across institutions. It is expected that modifications to these national formulas may arise as schools share local validation data on other factors that contribute to the prediction of student-athlete graduation.

The formulas were developed based on a cumulative-risks framework. The assumption under this model is that particular individual risk factors are not necessarily sufficient to classify somebody as "at risk." Rather, an accumulation of factors may be responsible for a student-athlete not graduating. Some factors (e.g., academic behavior) may be more strongly associated
with failure to graduate, but the path to that outcome may be very different for individual student-athletes.

One alternative approach to defining risk would have been to apply a conditional model of risk (also called sequential, interactive or decision tree approach). The conditional model divides the population to be judged into many homogeneous risk groupings based on a series of sequential judgments. However, with many risk factors, the number of possible judgments can become unwieldy. The working group instead decided to base GRO on a more simply explained and applied cumulative-risks model. To use the cumulative-risks approach, unique contributors to the risk of not graduating are measured and a risk score is created by forming a weighted sum of the number of risk factors present. The weights assigned to the risk factors were based in large part on statistical analyses (e.g., linear/logistic regression modeling of academic success/graduation) applied to NCAA longitudinal data of Division I student-athletes with a data span from high school through college to age 30.

The following tables outline the risk variables within the two endorsed models.
### TABLE 1: Academic Risk for Student-Athletes at Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Variable(s)/Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Academic**        | +2     | (HS student) HS core GPA < 2.6  or  
ACT/SAT < 820  or  
Core units < 16  or  
Academic nonqualifier  or  
Number of HS > 2  or  
Educational disability diagnosed  or  
Other locally identified criteria |
|                     |        | (Transfer) Transfer GPA < 2.6 (for 2-4 or 4-4 transfers)                              |
| **Role of Academics** | +1     | Identifies strongly as an athlete, not as a student                                  |
|                     |        | +2                                                                                   |  
Academic effort lacking (historical or contemporary) |
| **Transfer**        | +1     | Transferred into current institution (2-4 or 4-4)                                     |
| **Personal History** | +1     | First-generation college student  or  
Student has low financial resources  or  
Student is homesick  or  
Other locally identified criteria |
|                     | +1     | Personal, health, injury, family, mental health or substance abuse issue(s)           |
| **Sport**           | +1     | Student-athlete in high-profile sport at the institution  or  
High-profile (e.g., Olympic caliber) student-athlete                                   |
|                     | +1     | Team environment does not prioritize academics  or  
Coach in first year                                                                   |

**Total** 0-1 = low risk; 2-3 = moderate risk; 4+ = high risk
TABLE 2: Academic Risk for Student-Athletes Post-Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Variable(s)/Criteria</th>
</tr>
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| Academic               | +4 or +2 | (+4) Current cumulative GPA < 2.0 or Current term GPA < 2.0 or Academically ineligible within the past year  
|                        |        | (+2) Current cumulative GPA < 2.6 or Current term GPA < 2.6 or Education disability diagnosed or Other locally identifiable academic criteria |
| Role of Academics      | +1     | Identifies strongly as an athlete, not as a student or Professional sports opportunity presents |
|                        | +2     | Academic effort lacking (historical or contemporary)                                   |
|                        | +1     | Negative attitude toward major                                                        |
| Transfer               | +1     | Transferred into current institution (2-4 or 4-4)                                      |
| Personal History       | +1     | First-generation college student or Student has low financial resources or Student is homesick or Other locally identified criteria |
|                        | +1     | Personal, health, injury, personal, family, mental health or substance abuse issue(s) |
| Sport                  | +1     | Student-athlete in high-profile sport at the institution or High-profile (e.g., Olympic caliber) student-athlete |
|                        | +2     | No athletic eligibility remaining                                                    |
|                        | +1     | Team environment does not prioritize academics or Coaching change occurred or Student-athlete dissatisfied with athletics experience |
| Total                  |        | 0-2 = low risk; 3-4 = moderate risk; 5+ = high risk                                   |
The Academic Risk for Student-Athletes at Entry model (Table 1) is for use in quantifying risk levels of prospective student-athletes at or prior to their time of entry into a college or university and is designed for both recent high school graduates and transfers from two-year or four-year colleges. The model titled, Academic Risk for Student-Athletes Post-Entry (Table 2) was designed for periodic assessment of risk during the student-athlete's college career. As many of the factors that put a student-athlete at risk of not graduating are dynamic, it is recommended that the second model be administered each semester if possible, but at least once per academic year. Both formulas categorize risk factors into five groups:

1. Academic background/achievement;
2. Role of academics;
3. Transfer status;
4. Personal history; and
5. Sport-related issues.

Many of the factors use disjunctive (i.e., "or") logic to establish presence of a criterion; that is, the risk factor is noted if any of several conditions is met (e.g., high school grades below a certain level or ACT/SAT below a certain score). This logic allows for the possible examination of many correlated risk factors and the potential addition of local risk factors within any category without necessitating a change in the overall risk scores derived from each formula. This approach allows for more consistent comparisons of the GRO metric across institutions. As a result, the addition of locally identified risk factors should be added as part of an "or" chain on a particular variable and not as a new risk row -- that is, a separate 0 vs. +1 determination -- in either formula.

It has been noted that some data may not be practically obtained on each factor for each student, especially among student-athletes just entering an institution. In those cases, increased dialogue with or evaluation by coaches may prove useful in judging individual risk factors that could preclude graduation. If the formulas are administered as shown, the failure to assess certain factors could lead to risk assessments that are lower than warranted. In other words, the default values on each categorization are that risk does not exist for the student-athlete. Depending on local circumstances and availability of support services it may be preferable to assume that some or all student-athletes carry a certain risk factor unless or until demonstrated otherwise.

Also, there may be certain protective factors that mitigate overall risk to some degree. One example is having a strong personal relationship with a faculty member on campus. At the present time, the GRO formulas do not accommodate protective factors directly. For future
iterations it is recommended that when a strong mitigating factor is presented, the corresponding risk factor be adjusted from present to absent (or partially absent). For example, in the case above, the strong personal relationship with a faculty member could be considered in lowering the overall risk contribution of a student who is homesick from +1 to 0. As described above with locally identified risk factors, protective factors identified locally should be used as part of an "or" chain on a given row rather than as a new row until appropriate validation data are collected. This enhancement will be further examined as the system is developed.

For each GRO formula, an overall risk score is assigned to a student-athlete based on summing the listed weights for all factors present. The sum then can be used to place the student-athlete into a low, moderate or high risk classification. This score or classification should not be used alone to determine support services that would be beneficial to the student-athlete; risk of not graduating may have different causes and necessitate different forms of support. However, these values may assist in directing appropriate attention toward a student-athlete. Additionally, GRO scores can be compiled across individuals to display aggregate risk levels and to help identify resources needed to support a particular recruiting class, team or athletics program.

**Academic Risk for Student-Athletes at Entry**

The following sections provide definition to each risk category, along with the rationale for inclusion of each variable in the assessment.

**Category 1: Academic Background/Achievement:** Analysis of historical data collected by the NCAA consistently shows that academic performance in high school is the best single pre-college predictor of graduation behavior in college. Presently, high school grades are better graduation predictors than ACT/SAT scores when national data are examined in aggregate, but this is not universally true among Division I institutions. High school academic performance -- including core-course grade-point average, test scores, and number of core courses -- is a good, although far from perfect, predictor of academic success in college and it tends to be a better predictor of academic success early in a student-athlete's collegiate career. While core-course grade-point average and ACT/SAT scores are independently predictive of eventual college graduation, current research indicates that core-course grade-point average is generally two to three times more important in the prediction of collegiate academic outcomes than test scores. In addition, team graduation rates are related to the aggregate test score/core-course grade-point average profile of the student-athletes on the team. For example, teams with a majority of their members near or below the sliding scale are at the highest risk of not meeting NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) benchmarks. A review of national initial-eligibility data indicate student-athletes entering college with a test score/core-course grade-point average profile that
places them above the sliding scale used to determine Division I initial eligibility, but with test scores below the old test score benchmark (i.e., SAT of 820 or ACT of 68), are not necessarily the most at risk to experience academic difficulty. Further, student-athletes entering college with core-course grade-point averages between 2.0 and 2.5 tend to experience academic failure at higher rates than other academic qualifiers. Finally, student-athletes who were nonqualifiers, but received an initial-eligibility waiver, tend to have more academic difficulty than any group of initial qualifiers.

It is recommended that a value of +2 be added to the overall pre-entry risk score if a student-athlete presents a subthreshold high school grade-point average in core academic classes, obtains a subthreshold ACT or SAT score, does not pass a specified number of core academic classes in high school, is ruled to be an academic nonqualifier coming out of high school, has attended more than two high schools, has been diagnosed with an education-impacting disability or meets some other locally validated criteria. The listed cut scores of 2.6 for high school core grade-point average, 820 on the SAT (or ACT equivalent) and 16 core courses passed are recommended minimums. Many schools may find that higher benchmarks are more appropriate given the qualifications of the student-athletes/student body at their respective institutions and they are encouraged to modify those cut scores appropriately. Based on national data of Division I student-athletes, lower cut scores are not recommended.

A student-athlete transferring from a two- or four-year college into the certifying institution should be judged based on his or her grade-point average at the previous college(s) and any other locally identified factor(s) (e.g., number and type of credits being transferred). Research conducted by the NCAA has shown that high school academic behavior is not independently predictive of college graduation once college academic behavior is observed. However, for transfers who spent limited time in the previous four-year colleges or for any transfers from two-year colleges, examination of the high school academic criteria may prove useful.

It is suggested that student-athletes with an academic risk factor present have two points added to their overall risk score. Given that only two total points are needed to move a student-athlete into GRO's "moderate" risk classification, all student-athletes meeting any of the academic criteria will be categorized at the moderate risk level regardless of any other factor.

Category 2a: Role of Academics/Student-Athlete Identity: Research by the NCAA indicates that student-athletes who identify more as athletes than as students are at increased risk of not graduating as compared to other student-athletes, independent of academic achievement. Several scales have been developed to assess student-athlete identity, although a simple forced choice item (e.g., "Do you identify more as an athlete or a student?") has been shown to effectively capture this factor. Student-athletes thinking of themselves more as athletes than as students should have one point added to their overall risk score.
Category 2b: Role of Academics/Academic Effort: Data collected from two recent NCAA longitudinal studies of student-athlete experiences indicated that academic effort, even measured via student-athlete self-report, was a strong predictor of college grades and eventual graduation. These effects were independent of academic measures like grades and were similarly predictive. The statistical models indicate that adding two points to the overall risk score is appropriate if this factor is present.

Category 3: Transfer Status: A substantial body of NCAA research indicates that Division I student-athletes who transfer significantly increase their risk of not graduating. This effect is independent of academic preparation, although it may be exacerbated among underprepared students. The transfer effect may relate to a number of factors, including the loss of credits on transfer and lower feelings of engagement and/or community. NCAA research indicates that this effect is independent of whether the originating institution is a two- or four-year college.

Even after controlling for academic characteristics and a limited set of demographic variables, student-athletes transferring into a Division I institution are more likely to depart the institution as "0/2." Thus, any student-athlete transferring into the certifying institution should have an additional point added to his or her overall risk score.

Category 4a: Personal History/Family: A single point should be added to the overall risk total if the student-athlete is a first-generation college student, has low financial resources, is likely to experience higher than typical distress at being away from home/family or meets some similar locally-identified criteria.

Category 4b: Personal History/Personal Problems: Although they may be difficult to define at entry, personal problems such as health/injury, mental health, substance abuse or other issues should result in the addition of a point to the overall total.

Category 5a: Sport/High Profile: Student-athletes competing in sports that are considered high profile at the institution or who themselves are particularly high-profile athletes (e.g., Olympic hopefuls) should be considered at additional risk. In particular, research has shown that the high athletics time demands in certain "high-profile" sports (i.e., Division I baseball, Football Bowl Subdivision football, basketball) have implications for student-athlete academic performance.

Category 5b: Sport/Team Culture: Factors related to the academic culture of a student-athlete's team and/or coach also have been shown to relate to graduation likelihood. This factor could be assessed subjectively or based on the team's APR or Graduation Success Rate. Of the factors that are inherent in the institution, program or sports team, the institutional and team historical graduation rates are both important predictors of eventual Bachelor of Arts degree attainment. In addition, data indicate that positive feelings regarding the academic influence of coaches can be an important predictor of academic and longer-life outcomes. Additionally, there seems to be a
diminishing belief in how positive the influence of the coach is as students progress through college (i.e., seniors believe coaches to be less positive influences on academics than do freshmen). Finally, a change in coaches also has been shown to impact both the eligibility and retention status of student-athletes. This is relevant for incoming student-athletes in that we see some additional risk present during a new coach’s first year.

**FIGURE 2: Overall Classifications for Student-Athletes at Entry**

![GRO LEVELS](image)

**Academic Risk for Student-Athletes Post-Entry**

The following sections provide definition to each risk category, along with the rationale for inclusion of each variable in the assessment. Some of the factors are identical across the two formulas. Where applicable, differences are described below.

**Category 1: Academic Background/Achievement:** A two-tiered scoring system is recommended for continuing student-athletes at the institution. Those students who have experienced academic ineligibility, academic probation or other serious local issues should be considered moderate to high risk of not graduating, regardless of other factors. NCAA research confirms a student-athlete's college grade-point average is the most significant predictor of eventual Bachelor of Arts degree attainment. NCAA studies also indicate that a student-athlete presenting a grade-point average below 2.0 either cumulatively or in his or her most recent academic term should be considered a strong risk for academic failure at the certifying institution. As such, a student-athlete in any of those circumstances should be assigned four points in this metric. Two points are suggested for student-athletes with a cumulative or most recent term grade-point average between 2.0 and 2.6 (or higher if appropriate at the certifying institution), students who have a diagnosed education-impacting disability or students meeting some other locally identified criteria.

High school academic behavior -- or for transfer students, behavior at a previous college -- is not factored into this formula, as the NCAA's research generally shows that high school academic variables are no longer strong predictors once college academic behavior is taken into account. However, a local decision could be made to keep a risk level elevated if the high school or transfer profile presents sufficient concern.
Category 2a: Role of Academics/Student-Athlete Identity: This is similar to the same factor in the pre-entry formula, except for the explicit mention of student-athletes who may be in a position to consider professional or Olympic-type opportunities that may take them out of higher education.

Category 2b: Role of Academics/Academic Effort: Data collected from two recent NCAA longitudinal studies of student-athlete experiences indicated that academic effort, even measured via student-athlete self-report, was a strong predictor of college grades and eventual graduation. These effects were independent of academic measures like grades and were similarly predictive. The statistical models indicate that adding two points to the overall risk score is appropriate if this factor is present.

Category 2c: Role of Academics/Negative Attitude toward Major: Student-athletes' attitudes about their academic majors appear to be correlated with academic success and life satisfaction. NCAA research has indicated that student-athletes who feel less positive toward their respective majors are more likely to leave without degrees. This criterion may be more difficult to judge among underclass student-athletes or those who have yet to declare a major. However, attitudes toward their current classes and their academic plans should provide appropriate parallels.

Category 3: Transfer Status: Research indicates the act of transferring increases the length of time to graduation by approximately seven months. The longer a student remains separated from continuous enrollment, the greater the likelihood the student-athlete will not earn his or her four-year degree. Given that higher retention losses are seen among Division I transfer student-athletes even several years after entry into the receiving school, it is suggested that this factor remain as a contribution of one point to the total.

Category 4a: Personal History/Family: A single point should be added to the overall risk total if the student-athlete is a first-generation college student, has low financial resources, is likely to experience higher than typical distress at being away from home/family or meets some similar locally identified criteria. Note that although this is a similar criterion as in the entry model, family circumstances may change substantially over the course of a student-athlete's tenure at the certifying institution.

Category 4b: Personal History/Personal Problems: Although they may be difficult to define at entry, personal problems such as physical health/injury, mental health, substance abuse or other issues should result in the addition of a point to the overall total. These factors may be more readily identified post-entry than pre-entry.

Category 5a: Sport/High Profile: Student-athletes competing in sports that are considered high profile at the institution or who themselves are particularly high-profile athletes (e.g., Olympic hopefuls) should be considered at additional risk. In particular, research has shown that the high
athletics time demands in certain sports (i.e., Division I baseball, Football Bowl Subdivision football, basketball) have implications for student-athlete academic performance.

**Category 5b: Sport/Exhausted Eligibility:** Student-athletes who exhaust their athletics eligibility prior to graduation are at substantially increased risk of not graduating, even after other risk factors are considered. Student-athletes in certain sport groups (e.g., football and men's basketball) seem to be at even greater risk for academic failure as they exhaust their athletics eligibility. This is especially true for two-year transfer student-athletes, but the phenomenon occurs across both transfers and nontransfers. An addition of two points to the risk total is appropriate for these student-athletes. The presence of any additional risk factor then would move the student-athlete into at least a moderate risk grouping.

**Category 5c: Sport/Team Culture:** Similar to the same factor in the previous model. This factor would be scored +1 if any coaching change occurs, as NCAA research shows that the last year under one coach or the first year under another relates to increased risk of ineligibility or departure. Another addition to this factor is an examination of the student-athlete's satisfaction with his or her athletics experience. Expressed or apparent dissatisfaction should be expected to increase overall risk.

**FIGURE 3: Overall Classifications for Student-Athletes Post-Entry**

Note that these categorizations are defined slightly differently than in the entry model. Although changes are not recommended in the scaling of total risk in these models, modifications to the cut points defining the three general risk level groupings may be appropriate at the local level.

**DATA SOURCES**

As an element of an existing NCAA program, FLAG should be programmed in a language that is able to interface with existing NCAA and campus software systems that currently maintain data indicators of several of the risk variables identified within GRO. The group prioritized efficiency in the data collection process, to allow more time for service delivery and evaluation.
To this end, the system will allow for data to be imported from the NCAA Eligibility Center, other NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP) modules, Compliance Assistant (CA) and campus software, so that remaining data collection and assessment would be limited to only those factors that are otherwise unavailable. In addition, coaches and administrators should work together to collect personal characteristics of student-athletes during the recruiting process and throughout enrollment. Simply adding a few questions to a recruiting questionnaire or to a meeting outline for campus visits could facilitate collection of key observational data related to individual identity, perceived academic effort and personal history. See Appendix A for suggested data sources for the variables recommended for both GRO models.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Early identification of risk and early intervention with appropriate support services are crucial to improving each student-athlete's opportunity to graduate. Using the GRO module within FLAG, institutions can complete an individual assessment of each student-athlete's risk, from which FLAG will generate a list of suggested support services for the particular risk factors presented (See Appendix B). Considering the vast diversity within Division I, it is most beneficial to avoid prescriptive requirements regarding support services. As a result, the system will be programmed for flexibility to tailor the service list generated to match institutional programs and resources. These services should be organized by risk variable and should be measured for effectiveness each year using individual student-athlete outcomes. Further, institutions will be strongly encouraged to take advantage of existing campus resources to the greatest possible extent, rather than replicating services in the department of athletics. Whenever possible, support programming offered in response to the GRO assessment should maintain integration of student-athletes across sports and should be a collaborative effort with campus-wide student support programming.

Over time, "best" and "model" support practices that have a demonstrated history of success will be identified via FLAG's evaluation module and will be used to populate the suggested services field. These services and programs also will be maintained for the membership via a searchable database available within FLAG. Also, within the services module, a recommended ratio of staff to student-athletes could be provided. However, even with this enhancement, it will be important to stress that local variances in factors such as resources available and the number of student-athletes served are important to consider when selecting services. In the interim, the NCAA national office staff should continue working with its academic partner organizations (e.g., N4A, NACADA, FARA, 1A FAR) to identify suggested support strategies to be programmed into the system.
PROGRAM EVALUATION

FLAG will include an evaluation mechanism to assist institutions in assessing the overall level of risk presented by current student-athletes collectively, including the mitigating effects of support services provided. Assessing risk factors for all student-athletes will provide for a measure of the cumulative risk of a team or program and will produce useful information when campus decision makers and practitioners are planning and budgeting appropriate support services. The FLAG reports will assess the aggregate level of risk assumed by the institution, along with the potential risk of each recruiting class, to inform recruiting and admissions decisions, including decisions regarding special or alternate admissions. The reporting feature will allow institutions to quantify outcomes and measure improvement (e.g., decreased risk) for individuals or groups of student-athletes based on the support provided. The reports also will be useful communication tools for discussions within the department of athletics, across campus and with external constituents.

EVALUATION REPORT

The third module of FLAG will offer an evaluation mechanism that will produce a report designed to serve as a management tool for campus decision makers and practitioners. Specifically, the report should provide periodic benchmarks regarding the risk assumed by the institution in its recruitment, admission and ongoing enrollment of student-athletes, as well as the potential impact of the support services provided. Ideally, the report would provide useful information to guide institutional resource (e.g., budget and staffing), recruiting and admissions choices. The goal is not to prescribe student-athlete support services, resources or admissions decisions for Division I institutions; rather, the evaluation's purpose should be to quantify outcomes and to inform. Ultimately, institutions should be able to use the evaluation mechanism to determine the amount of risk already assumed (i.e., existing within current student-athlete population), as well as the level of additional risk that can be assumed via the prospective student-athlete recruiting and admissions processes. Further, it would be most beneficial if the evaluation could determine the level of student-athlete awareness of and engagement in support services and whether student-athlete support services (academic or otherwise) should be enhanced, added or eliminated. The evaluation module will produce a report that will provide, at a minimum, the following quantifiable outcomes:

1. Aggregate risk by team, year of enrollment and admissions status.

2. Aggregate risk by Eligibility ("E") and Retention ("R") factors, also reported by team, year of enrollment and admissions status.
3. Number of student-athletes assigned to or participating in support services, noted by provider (e.g., within or outside athletics), as well as "E" and "R" categories.

4. Improvement, to be measured by increases/decreases in risk for each student-athlete, including a measurement of the effectiveness of counter-activities provided via support services.

The report generated by the evaluation mechanism should be drafted in a manner useful to a wide variety of campus and external audiences. The staffs within athletics, academic affairs, academic support services, student services and admissions all may find value in the report. In addition, the report should be able to be used to fulfill broad-based reporting practices, in the event the institution would like to share the report with its athletics board, faculty groups (e.g., faculty senate), external groups, or to meet NCAA requirements (e.g., NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance waivers and APR Improvement Plans). Further, given the importance of institutional autonomy in determining the use and appropriate audience for the report, flexibility in timing is of the essence. Institutions should be permitted to choose when to use the evaluation tool and when to disseminate the resulting report.

To be most useful, the report should include a visual representation of data (e.g., scatter plots by team, by class, by risk level), as well as bullet-point summaries. Also, a preliminary summary report should be provided for internal review, with text boxes available for optional commentary/narrative to be completed (e.g., by academic support staff) to offer context within the final report. Finally, the mechanism should include optional text boxes for conclusions, future planning, decisions and commentary by review teams or groups tasked with implementing follow-up action.

**Benefits of FLAG**

Implementation of the FLAG system will provide multiple benefits to users and institutions will be encouraged to fully engage in the program. Specifically:

1. FLAG emphasizes early identification and early intervention to facilitate graduation success for every student-athlete, regardless of level or category of risk presented.

2. FLAG offers a consistent approach that can be implemented among institutional and athletics academic advisors in their respective programs or sports.

3. FLAG provides a structure for estimating levels of support each student-athlete should receive, beginning with matriculation and extending through graduation or separation from the institution.
4. FLAG provides data and assessment opportunities for individual graduation success plans and team APR Improvement Plans.

5. GRO provides a starting place for consistent and standard assessment of incoming and continuing student-athletes by applying a simple scoring system.

6. GRO allows institutions to incorporate their own first-year predictive models and early intervention assessments.

7. GRO fosters a continued, standard assessment of student-athletes' academic and individual "readiness" that accounts for changes in status throughout their respective college careers.

8. GRO provides data for statistical analyses of incoming (e.g., freshman and transfer) and continuing student-athlete profiles, support provided and academic performance.

9. This process is fairly simple and cost effective, and will be facilitated by software provided by the NCAA. The system itself will be available at no cost to institutions.

**CONCLUSION**

The development of the FLAG system was approved by the Academic Cabinet, and this report shall serve as a working document to guide the NCAA staff in developing and implementing the concepts. The following time line is suggested for a phased development and implementation of the program.

February 2009 Academic Cabinet review.

April 2009 Committee on Academic Performance review of request to include GRO data fields and FLAG components within the APP system.

Spring-Summer 2009 Education and outreach.

Program data fields within the APP.

Fall 2009 Phase 1: Student-athlete assessment module (i.e., GRO) available to membership through APP.
Education and outreach continues.

2009-10 Phase II: Support services and program evaluation programming.

Education and outreach continues.

Spring-Sumer 2010 Phase II implementation.

Education and outreach continues.

In addition, the report will be shared with a number of constituent groups (e.g., academic advisors, faculty athletics representatives, life-skills coordinators, student-athlete advisory committees, member conferences, coaches associations) in anticipation of their interest in the research findings and modeling results provided therein. The support of chancellors and presidents will be crucial in this endeavor as academic support professionals are asked to undertake more nuanced efforts to assess and support student-athletes. Support and "buy-in" from directors of athletics, administrative staff and coaches also will be important to the successful implementation of FLAG on any campus. As a result, outreach efforts will be specifically tailored to each audience in order to communicate the program's particular relevancy to each constituent group. For example, materials developed for the national coaching organizations will communicate the program's utility for head and assistant coaches in their efforts to support student-athlete eligibility, retention and, ultimately, graduation.

Student-athletes fall along a continuum of risk that is based on multiple factors, not all of which are academic. Institutional units must collaborate to identify student-athlete support needs and to provide quality services and programs to foster student-athlete graduation success. In addition, informed decision making is essential to optimizing campus resources to mitigate student-athlete hurdles to graduation. To this end, FLAG is designed to address each of these principles and to support institutional endeavors to ensure graduation for every student-athlete.
### Data Sources for Risk Variables

**Model 1: Academic Risk for Student-Athletes at Entry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables/Data Fields</th>
<th>Possible Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td>HS core GPA. ACT/SAT. Core units. Academic nonqualifier. Number of high schools.</td>
<td>CA. NCAA Eligibility Center. Institutional student records system. EID status (if late diagnosis) and local variables entered by institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education-impacted disability diagnosed. Other locally identified criteria. Transfer GPA &lt; 2.6 (for 2-4 or 4-4 transfers).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of academics</strong></td>
<td>Identifies strongly as athlete, not as student.</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution. Online survey instrument and automatically populated rating. Conduct interview during recruiting process or during orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic effort lacking (historical or contemporary).</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution. Online survey instrument and automatically populate rating. Conduct interview during recruiting process or during orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td>Transferred into current institution (2-4 or 4-4).</td>
<td>CA. APP database. Institutional student records system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal history</strong></td>
<td>First-generation college student. Student has low financial resources. Student is homesick. Other locally identified criteria.</td>
<td>NCAA Eligibility Center. Financial resources may be available from financial aid office. Determined/entered by institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal, health, injury, family, mental health or substance abuse issue(s).</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sport</strong></td>
<td>Student in high-profile sport at current institution. High profile (e.g., Olympic caliber) student-athlete.</td>
<td>CA or APP, but institution would designate which sports are high profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team environment does not prioritize academics. Coach in first year.</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution, but could automatically populate for all student-athletes on the team.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Data Sources for Risk Variables

### Model 2: Academic Risk for Student-Athletes Post-Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variable(s) / Criteria</th>
<th>Possible Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Current cumulative GPA. Current term GPA. Academically ineligible within the past year. Other locally identifiable academic criteria.</td>
<td>CA, APP, or institutional student records system for first 3 variables. Local variables entered by institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of academics</td>
<td>Identifies strongly as athlete, not as student. Professional sports opportunity presents.</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution. Online survey instrument and automatically populated rating. Conduct interview during recruiting process or during orientation. Coaching staff monitors professional sports prospects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic effort lacking (historical or contemporary).</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution. Online survey instrument and automatically populate rating. Conduct interview during recruiting process or during orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative attitude toward major.</td>
<td>Determined/entered by institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transferred into current institution (2-4 or 4-4).</td>
<td>CA, APP, or institutional student records system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Personal history | First-generation college student.  
|                  | Student has low financial resources.  
|                  | Student is homesick.  
|                  | Other locally identified criteria.  
|                  | NCAA Eligibility Center.  
|                  | Financial resources may be available from financial aid office.  
|                  | Determined/entered by institution.  
|                  | Personal, health, injury, family, mental health or substance abuse issue(s).  
|                  | Determined/entered by institution.  
| Sport            | Student in high-profile sport at current institution.  
|                  | High-profile (e.g., Olympic caliber) student-athlete.  
|                  | CA or APP, but institution would designate which sports are high profile.  
|                  | Exhausted eligibility.  
|                  | APP.  
|                  | Team environment does not prioritize academics.  
|                  | Coaching change occurred.  
|                  | Dissatisfied with athletics experience.  
|                  | Determined/entered by institution, but could automatically populate for all student-athletes on the team for first two variables.  
|                  | Determine satisfaction through progress meetings with student-athlete or through communication with coaching staff. |
## Appropriate Support Services for Student-Athletes

### Model 1: Academic Risk for Student-Athletes at Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables/Data Fields</th>
<th>E/R</th>
<th>Appropriate Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td>High school core GPA. ACT/SAT. Core units. Academic nonqualifier. Number of high schools. Education-impacting disability diagnosed. Other locally identified criteria. Transfer GPA &lt; 2.6 (for 2-4 or 4-4 transfers).</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Summer Bridge programs (e.g., credit and relationship building). First Year Seminars. Register with Disability Services early – arrange accommodations previous to start of classes. Placement tests (reading, writing, math, foreign language). Develop educational plan with coaches and family previous to fall term, including supports needed to be successful: - Structured study/tutoring (objective-based study hall); - Academic strategies development (reading, writing, study skills, test-taking, time management). Academic or faculty mentor/coach. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of academics</strong></td>
<td>Identifies strongly as athlete, not as student.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Integrated first-year seminar (perhaps outside of athletics; include other students). Attend institutional orientation. Faculty mentor. Career exploration/linkage between academic major and career (Career Services). * Connect to resources/information about likelihood of becoming a professional athlete (NCAA info, guest speakers, review status of institutional alumni/previous classes of student-athletes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic effort lacking (historical or contemporary).</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Faculty mentor. Study skills assessment and educational plan. * Time management strategy. * Academic mentor/coach regular meetings (e.g., weekly). Objective-based study hall (including structured observation/presence). * Effective reading skills. Appropriate course placement/selection. *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Transfer                                                                 | Institution transfer orientation program.  
|                                                                      | Early identification of curricular transfer issues.  
|                                                                      | Meet with transfer academic advisor in college or major department.  
|                                                                      | Academic assessment if at risk GPA (reading, writing, math, foreign language).  
|                                                                      | Monitor possible EID problems.  
|                                                                      | Major identification – plan to complete degree by term (individual graduation plan, including degree audit and sequence/timing courses will be taken).  
| Personal history                                                      | Academic mentor and coach.  
|                                                                      | Structured/objective-based study hall.  
|                                                                      | Peer mentor on team.*  
|                                                                      | Regular communication with parent/significant family member, student-athlete and academic support staff.  
|                                                                      | Provide guidance; "navigating the university."  
|                                                                      | Workshops for parents/family members how to support student-athletes.  
|                                                                      | Connect with financial aid resources and assistance.  
|                                                                      | Use Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund  
|                                                                      | - Reserve some funds specifically for lower-income students.  
|                                                                      | Nonacademic/nonathletic mentors or role models. *  
|                                                                      | Relationship management with coach and others. *  
|                                                                      | Counseling: Transition, depression/anxiety, goal setting, injury support, motivation and burnout. *  
| Sport                                                                  | Academic mentor/faculty mentor.  
|                                                                      | Coach on plan with academics.  
|                                                                      | Objective-based study hall.  
|                                                                      | Best practice meeting with director of athletics, coach, academic director – all agree on academic plan with benchmarks – follow up on weekly basis.  
|                                                                      | Build relationship with coach – make sure he/she understands institutional academic culture and APR challenges.  
|                                                                      | Provide regular academic progress reports to coach and director of athletics.  
|                                                                      | Academic support staff travel with team.  

* Services may be available through CHAMPS/Life Skills.
### Appropriate Support Services for Student-Athletes

**Model 2: Academic Risk for Student-Athletes Post-Entry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables/Data Fields</th>
<th>E/R</th>
<th>Appropriate Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Current cumulative GPA.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Access institutional academic support programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current term GPA.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Assess tutorial needs; implement appropriate support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academically ineligible within the past year.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Objective-based study hall with academic mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other locally identifiable academic criteria.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Regular reporting to coach and director of athletics on academic progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Strategic advising and registration with colleges resulting in a plan for academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of academics</td>
<td>Identifies strongly as athlete, not as student.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Identification with major is critical with a plan for completion of degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional sports opportunity presents.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Maintain good academic standing to ensure eligibility to return to complete degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty mentor in major program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan B – career/graduation school if pro sports is not an option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic effort lacking (historical or contemporary).</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Academic mentor with objective-based study hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regular meetings with academic counselor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Early Alert reports from faculty – follow faculty recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Involve coach in academic goals and objectives – rewards and consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative attitude toward major.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Partner with Career Services/Career Counselors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Career/Major inventory if change needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connect major with a specific career (i.e., work backward from career to major).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Transferred into current institution (2-4 or 4-4).</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Transition from previous institution to current placement into college courses—compare rigor of academic expectations and provide support where there might be gaps, (e.g., math tutoring to bring to level of four-year institution). Peer mentor with team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal history</td>
<td>First-generation college student. Student has low financial resources. Student is homesick. Other locally identifiable academic criteria.</td>
<td>R R R</td>
<td>Academic mentor and coach. Structured/objective-based study hall. Peer mentor on team. Regular communication with parent/significant family member. Connect with financial aid resources and assistance Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal history</td>
<td>Personal, health, injury, family, mental health or substance abuse issue(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partner with institutional counseling services. Case management approach with athletic training room and team physician. Coach involvement. Create support network. Work with family when appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Student in high-profile sport at your school.</td>
<td>E, R</td>
<td>Academic mentor/faculty mentor. Coach on plan with academics. Objective-based study hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Exhausted eligibility prior to graduation.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Maintain connection with academic support services. Regular appointments with academic counselor (continued contact with institution). Student Assistant assignment. Partner with Career Services/ Internship Experience. Plan for future career and/or graduate school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team environment does not prioritize academics.</td>
<td>E, R R R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching change occurred.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with athletics experience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practice meeting with director of athletics, coach, academic director – all agree on academic plan with benchmarks – follow up on weekly basis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build relationship with coach – make sure he/she understands institutional academic culture and APR challenges.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide regular academic progress reports to coach and AD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic support staff travels with team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve student in CHAMPS/Life Skills programs/activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner with campus counseling services.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect academic progress for possible transfer and work with student to look at alternatives, strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with compliance office on transfer issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members of the NCAA Division I Working Group Examining
Issues Associated with Academic Risk

Mr. Jean Boyd, Associate Athletics Director, Arizona State University

Ms. Kim Callicoatte, Senior Associate Athletics Director, Sacred Heart University

Mr. Jim Castan, Faculty Athletics Representative, Rice University

Ms. Barbara Church, Senior Associate Commissioner, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

Ms. Ruth Darling, Assistant Vice Provost, University of Tennessee

Mr. David Dosser, Faculty Athletics Representative, East Carolina University

Ms. Kim Durand, Associate Athletics Director for Student Development, University of Washington

Mr. Brian Evans, Associate Athletics Director for Student Services, Utah State University

Mr. Robert Gundlach, Faculty Athletics Representative, Northwestern University

Ms. Pat Howey, Senior Woman Administrator, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Ms. Kathy Keene, Associate Commissioner, Sun Belt Conference

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Ms. Brittany Loisel, Student-Athlete, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

Mr. Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics, Middle Tennessee State University

Ms. Ann Maxim, Senior Woman Administrator, University of Maine

Mr. Steve McDonnell, Associate Athletics Director for Academic Services, Texas A&M University

Dr. Sidney McPhee, President, Middle Tennessee State University, chair

Ms. Mary Mulvenna, Assistant Commissioner for Compliance, Missouri Valley Conference

Mr. Harold Pace, University Registrar, University of Notre Dame

Mr. Terry Don Phillips, Athletics Director, Clemson University

Mr. William Ravenell, Faculty Athletics Representative, Florida A&M University