

NOVEMBER 2002

PRESIDENTS COUNCIL/MANAGEMENT COUNCIL JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF DIVISION III

Background.

- Dual origin. Both “internal” and “external.”
- "Internal" origin. Over the past few years, several legislative issues have divided the Division III membership as they were debated and voted on at the Convention. Examples include playing and practice seasons, especially the nontraditional segment; championships access; redshirting.
- "External" origin. At the same time, informal discussions have begun among segments of the membership regarding what role athletics plays and should play in the Division III educational experience. The publication of "The Game of Life" likely served as catalyst for these discussions or, at the very least, helped to increase their intensity. The discussions included an informal group of chief executive officers (CEOs), led by former President Steven Lewis at Carleton College.
- During their January 2002 NCAA Convention meetings, the NCAA Division III Presidents and Management Councils noted that many of these issues strike at the very heart of the Division III philosophy and could impact the long-term status and direction of our division.
- Aware that we were at a particularly critical juncture in our history, the Councils agreed to establish the joint subcommittee to further explore these topics. The goal was not to “squelch” or preclude external discussions. Rather, the feeling is that the governance structure has a responsibility to take up these issues, given their scope and importance.

Charge.

- Examine the shared educational values of the division in light of the Division III philosophy.
- Explore options for legislative and organizational changes, consistent with those shared values and the philosophy.

Composition and Structure.

- Twenty-one Presidents and Management Council members, led by the chair and vice-chair of the Presidents Council – Bette Landman, president, Arcadia University, and John McCardell, president, Middlebury College.
- Oversight group composed of eight members to oversee and coordinate the work of five subgroups, address all budget issues and make final recommendations to the Presidents and Management Councils.
- Five subgroups, each composed of Presidents and Management Council members and including at least one member of the oversight group. Each group is focusing on applicable sections of the Division III philosophy statement to identify key issues that the Division III governance structure should address in greater detail.
- The five subgroups are:

1. Championships.

Goal. To evaluate the Division III championships experience for student-athletes consistent with the philosophy, championships access and success, and the size and diversity of the division:

- ★ Primary emphasis to regional in-season competition and conference championships.
- ★ Support student-athletes in their efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance (i.e., facilities, coaching and competition).
- ★ Place special importance on the impact of athletics on participants rather than on spectators and the general public.

Structures – Options to Consider.

Model 1 – one division/one national championship (current structure).

Model 2 – two subdivisions and two national championships.

Model 3 – two subdivisions in the preliminary rounds, playing to one national champion.

Model 4 (regional championships) – one division playing to four regional champions.

Model 5 – no national championships structure.

Issues Related to Championships Structure.

- Specific costs, including staffing, to be determined. Model 1 – costs remain status quo. Model 2 – likely most expensive with addition of game/staff expense and committee structure for additional national championships. Model 3 – additional expenses likely for one additional game and staff. Model 4 – possibly less expensive due to decrease in total games, staff and travel. Model 5 – least expensive.
- Length of postseason play. After Model 5, Model 4 may be the shortest with elimination of national championship, followed by Models 3, 2 and 1.
- Impact on conferences, including conference championships and postseason opportunities. Model 5 has no impact. Models 1 and 4 may have no impact. Models 2 and 3 have potential impact.
- Access ratios.
 - ✓ Overall access ratios between sports and subdivisions (including conferences and independents) would remain consistent with current access ratios for Models 2, 3 and 4.
- Quality.
 - ✓ Provide student-athletes with a competitive, quality NCAA championship experience (equipment, facilities, atmosphere).
- Institutional self-selection.
 - ✓ All sports within the institutional athletics program would be in the same subdivision.
- Governance structure – championships and sport committees.
 - ✓ The composition, role and responsibilities related to championships structure must be addressed.

2. **Eligibility and Recruiting.**

Goal. To evaluate Division III rules to ensure that their intent and application are consistent with the stated philosophy:

- ★ Assure that athletics participants and nonathletes are not treated differently.
- ★ Assure that athletics programs support the institutional mission.
- ★ Assure that the actions of coaches and administrators exhibit fairness, openness and honesty in their relationships with student-athletes.

Academic Eligibility – Option to Consider.

- Initial and continuing eligibility – continue to minimize infringements on institutional autonomy.

Academic Eligibility/Practice – Option to Consider.

- Redefine eligibility limits to include practice or competition. A student-athlete would be limited to four seasons of eligibility. Practice or competition during a season would count as one of four available seasons.

Athletics Eligibility/Seasons of Competition – Options to Consider.

- 10-semester/15-quarter rule – retain current 10-semester/15-quarter eligibility clock but focus on the undergraduate experience.
- Eight-semester/12-quarter clock – participation based on seasons of participation (practice or competition). Foster academic success and completion of degree in a reasonable time with greater emphasis on the undergraduate experience.
- Four-year running clock – continuous clock based on initial enrollment. Consider issues related to changed majors and study abroad.
- Final semester of eligibility – consider steps to prevent enrollment in less than a full-time program of studies merely to extend eligibility. Athletics should not inhibit degree completion. Consider removal of issue if eligibility limits to “participation” are redefined to include practice and

competition. Also, consider establishing a maximum number of courses or credit hours beyond which a student would use a semester or quarter of eligibility (e.g., one course).

- Graduate student/postbaccalaureate participation – consider permitting students in graduate or postbaccalaureate programs the opportunity to participate in intercollegiate athletics regardless of the institution attended as an undergraduate.

Athletics Eligibility/Recruiting – Options to Consider

- Off-campus recruitment – establish a principle that athletics recruitment should comply with established policies and procedures applicable to the admissions process. Retain current legislation to prohibit in-person, off-campus recruitment and contacts with student-athletes until completion of junior year in high school.
- Transfer contact rule – consider steps to strengthen rule to preclude unsolicited contact and subsequent transfer and enrollment. Aggressively address violations through the enforcement and eligibility-restoration process.
- Special admissions for student-athletes - consider impact of such policies.

3. Financial Aid.

Goal. To evaluate commitment to and compliance with current Division III rules consistent with philosophy:

- ★ Award no athletically related financial aid.
- ★ Assure that athletics participants are not treated differently from other members of the student body.
- ★ Assure that actions of coaches and administrators exhibit fairness, openness and honesty in their relationships with student-athletes.

Financial Aid – Options to Consider.

Model 1 – Status quo. No consideration of athletics in award packaging, buttressed by proposed annual audit and reporting process. Primary focus.

Model 2 – Permit consideration of athletics in granting of aid up to need ("preferential packaging"). Limited focus.

Financial Aid/Legislative Revision.

- Re-examine provisions of NCAA Bylaw 15.01.5 (athletics funds or endowments established prior to January 1, 1979).

4. Membership.

Goal. To evaluate Division III rules to ensure consistency with the philosophy to encourage participation by maximizing the number and variety of athletics opportunities for student-athletes:

- ★ Provide equitable athletics opportunities for males and females and give equal emphasis to all sports.
- ★ Support ethnic and gender diversity for all constituents.
- ★ Assure that athletics programs support the educational mission of institutions.

Sports Sponsorship Requirements – Options to Consider.

- Model 1 – retain current sports sponsorship requirements of 5 for men and 5 for women. Model 2 – increase the minimum based on division-wide average of almost 16 total. Model 3 – decrease sponsorship requirements based on institutional autonomy.
- Multidivision classification. Discuss further limits or the elimination of this opportunity.

Coaching, Travel and Squad Limits – Options to Consider.

- Coaching limits. Consider establishing limits on number of permissible coaches per sport, based on reasonable full-time equivalent ratio of par-

ticipants to coaches in each sport. Progress cautiously on development of criteria.

- Travel and Squad sizes. Consider travel and varsity squad size limits, based in part on championships squad size limits and Division III participation statistics and data.

Membership Structure – Options to Consider.

- Retain one division – status quo. Respond as necessary to proposals from all subgroups of the joint subcommittee and/or membership.
- Subdivision. Respond as necessary to subdivision proposals from the other subgroups of the joint subcommittee and/or membership. Identify possible “division dominant” legislation that would remain applicable to the division as a whole (two-thirds majority to change) and other provisions that could apply only to the members of a subdivision.
- Acknowledge that any subdivision discussions must address issues related to institutional self-selection and conference affiliation.

5. Playing and practice seasons.

Goal: To evaluate Division III rules to ensure their intent and application remain consistent with the stated philosophy:

- ★ Equitable athletics opportunities for males and females, with equal emphasis to both.
- ★ Encourage participation by maximizing the number and variety of athletics opportunities.
- ★ Assist members in developing the basis for consistently equitable competition while minimizing infringement on the freedom of individual institutions.
- ★ Primary emphasis to regional in-season competition and conference championships.
- ★ Support student-athletes in efforts to reach high levels of athletics performance (i.e., facilities, coaching and competition).

Length of Playing Season – Options to Consider.

- Modify and make more consistent length of playing seasons based on a student's overall percentage of time engaged in athletics.
- Establish specific start and end dates, which may be all-inclusive (i.e., pre-season conditioning through end of championship).
- Establish reasonable contest limits – minimize impact on missed class time.
- Reduce or eliminate limitations, based on institutional autonomy.

Nontraditional Segment – Options to Consider.

Model 1 – retain current regulations.

Model 2 – consider further limitation (e.g., fewer contests or practice only).

Model 3 – eliminate nontraditional segment (no practice or competition).

Model 4 – eliminate nontraditional segment but permit limited individual skill instruction.

Athletically Related Activities – Time Limitations.

- Consider a limit on student-athlete participation in countable athletically related activities during the traditional and nontraditional segments of 20 hours per week with the addition of five hours a week to discuss or review game film.

Discussion Questions.

1. The Division III philosophy statement articulates a unique role for athletics to play in higher education. Have we allowed athletics to receive greater emphasis to the detriment of the student-athlete's overall academic experience and our educational mission? If so, what should be done to regain the proper balance?
2. The philosophy statement specifies that national championships should not be the primary emphasis in Division III; rather, regular season conference and regional competition should be the focus. However, there appears to be an increased emphasis on championships access and success in Division III. What role should national championships play in Division III? Should Division III championships be expanded, retained, reduced or eliminated in that regard?
3. Division III eligibility and recruiting rules traditionally have been minimal, in deference to institutional and conference autonomy. Should more restrictive rules be adopted to better ensure that the academic and demographic profile of student-athletes at each school more closely resembles that of its nonstudent-athletes?
4. The prohibition against athletically related financial aid is a cornerstone of the Division III philosophy. Should the prohibition be retained or loosened?
5. The philosophy statement calls for member schools to maximize the number and variety of athletics opportunities for their students and to provide equitable competitive opportunities. Division III currently requires a member school to sponsor at least 10 sports (five for each gender). The average Division III school sponsors approximately 16 sports. Should sports sponsorship minimums increase, consistent with the goal of broad-based athletics programs? Should the size of coaching staffs or travel parties be restricted to better ensure the equitable allocation of resources among sports?
6. The portion of the philosophy statement calling for schools to maximize the number and variety of competitive opportunities has been interpreted to justify the expansion of competitive opportunities during the traditional and nontraditional playing season and to defeat efforts to further limit those competitive opportunities. To what extent does our current playing and practice season legislation support or undermine the role of athletics in higher education? Should the length of the playing season, the permissible number of contests and the amount of time student-athletes are permitted to engage in athletically related activities with teammates and coaches be adjusted to better reflect the philosophy?
7. It is likely that significant differences of opinion will continue to exist regarding many of these issues. In that light, should we attempt to address and resolve the issues for the division as a whole, or should we consider solutions (e.g., subdivision) that will permit subsets of the membership to address their concerns and interests more directly?

Status Report.

- The sense during the summer of 2002 was that the governance structure was too far out front of the rest of the membership in its discussion and understanding of the issues.
- Therefore, the focus this fall has been on communication and discussion at the conference level. Presidents Council and Management Council members are attending various conference meetings to "take more ownership" regarding this issue and to encourage more membership discussion and feedback.
- A significant segment of the division is interested in the idea of subdivision. Models submitted focus on subdivision for championships purposes and include criteria that would reduce the playing and practice season and increase sports sponsorship requirements. However, few subdivision models have been submitted.
- The Mellon Foundation is preparing to publish a book to follow-up "The Game of Life." It likely will contain some specific recommendations that focus on Division III, including, perhaps, a call for subdivision. Mellon representatives also reportedly have encouraged informal discussions among a group of 60-70 "academically elite" schools regarding the future of Division III.
- Such recommendations from "outside" groups can be very helpful to encourage positive change, but they must be thoroughly evaluated by the governance structure and the membership if they ultimately are to be adopted. That can take significant time and effort. The analogy is to the Knight Foundation recommendations in the early 1990s for athletics reform.
- The members of Division III have the ability to chart their own destiny and address all significant concerns from within the NCAA structure.
- We encourage CEOs to discuss these issues on your campus and within your conference. Under the NCAA's governance structure, CEOs can and should take a leadership role in resolving these issues, but ultimately must become better informed if they are to play an effective role.
- An in-depth discussion forum on this topic will occur on Sunday afternoon, January 12, at the 2003 NCAA Convention in Anaheim. No legislation is planned until 2004 at the earliest and that likely would have a delayed effective date.

Timetable:

- The goal is for dialogue, discussion and feedback from the membership during the remainder of 2002 and throughout 2003. This will include discussions at various conference and association meetings, as well as direct contact with CEOs by members of the Presidents Council.
- A membership forum will take place Sunday afternoon at the 2003 Convention (Sunday afternoon, January 12).
- A survey will be sent to the membership in late winter (February/March 2003). Follow-up phone calls will occur with selected groups to help ensure the integrity of the survey.
- Focus group meetings will occur in April 2003 to help translate the survey findings into legislative proposals.
- Legislation will not be considered until the 2004 Convention, at the earliest.
- In addition, legislation will include a delayed effective date (e.g., August 2006) in order to give schools and conferences ample time to prepare for implementation at the institutional and conference levels.

Feedback and Additional Information:

- Forward your thoughts or issues to any subcommittee member (roster online) or to NCAA staff liaisons Dan Dutcher (ddutcher@ncaa.org) or Bridget Belgiovine (bbelgiovine@ncaa.org). All comments will be forwarded to the oversight group, and regular updates will be presented to the Management and Presidents Councils and the full membership.
- Detailed information is available at the NCAA's Web site, www.ncaa.org.