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**RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE KNIGHT COMMISSION ON  
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics [met on May 7, 2018](#) and proposed the following recommendations for the NCAA to consider as complementary reforms to those advanced by the Commission on College Basketball. The roster of Knight Commission members involved in these deliberations is attached.

The appropriate NCAA working group for each recommendation is highlighted below:

- I. **NCAA Governance.** In addition to adding at least five independent directors to the NCAA Board of Governors as recommended by the Commission on College Basketball, add at least six independent members to the NCAA Division I Board of Directors, and move towards making independent appointees the majority on both boards.

**Background:** The Commission on College Basketball, led by Condoleezza Rice, rightly emphasized the NCAA's often overlooked role: To administer what "is effectively a public trust in the —United States—athletic competition among college athletes."

We believe the NCAA can only fulfill its responsibility to administer this "public trust," if its governing board and the Division I Board of Directors are controlled by a majority of independent appointees, much as is the case with many corporate and nonprofit boards.

The Rice Commission adopted a [longstanding recommendation of the Knight Commission](#) to add independent directors to the NCAA Board of Governors, the organization's highest-ranking governing body.

The Knight Commission also urges the NCAA to add at least six independent members to the Division I Board of Directors, because that board controls policies that shape the richest and most powerful college sports programs.

As a matter of guiding principle, independent directors should ultimately comprise majorities of both boards.

This change will shift the NCAA's governance model from solely being a membership association, with inherent conflicts of interest, to being more of a leadership organization capable of propelling real change. In the current model, board members are often expected to represent their conferences' competitive and financial interests first, instead of what may be best for student-athletes and college sports as a whole. More independent leadership of the NCAA will provide greater objectivity, unhindered by institutional self-interest, to better safeguard the integrity of college athletics.

**[Recommended to NCAA Working Group: Association-wide issues]**

- II. Integrity and Financial Transparency. Adopt new and more stringent approvals, terms of conditions, and financial disclosures for income that institutions and coaches receive from shoe, equipment, and apparel companies. Specifically:
- A. No university can give the right to any employee to have a contract with shoe, equipment, and apparel companies that is expressly or indirectly contingent on players wearing or using the companies' equipment or products. Such contracts must be made only with the university.
  - B. Adopt the following financial disclosures on athletically-related outside income received by employees and make a failure to comply with these new requirements subject to significant infractions penalties. The Commission recommended three new disclosure requirements for outside income:
    - 1. **Public disclosure of outside income.** For any school where student-athletes are required or asked to wear or use apparel or equipment displaying a company logo, mandate public disclosure of outside income that school employees, including coaches, receive directly from the company or from the school with designated funds from the company. This required public disclosure would extend to any private university that competes in the NCAA.
    - 2. **Campus approval and written reports.** Reinstate the requirement for coaches and other administrators to receive approval from the university CEO to receive any athletically-related outside income (e.g., income from shoe, equipment and apparel companies). Further, strengthen this requirement by specifying that the amount of income approved must be given *in writing* and *prior* to the receipt of such income. [Note: This requirement would bring back and strengthen a requirement first adopted in 1992 at the Knight Commission's urging but rescinded in 2016.] In addition, university presidents should be required to annually report to their governing boards the amounts and sources of athletically-related outside income received by employees.
    - 3. **Reporting on NCAA financial reports.** Require the reporting of all athletically-related outside income for coaches and administrators in NCAA financial reports.

**Background:** The Rice Commission report recommended new financial requirements for non-scholastic basketball events attended by NCAA coaches, and called on shoe and apparel companies to “implement financial transparency and accountability with respect to their own investments in non-scholastic basketball.” The Knight Commission supports these measures but believes that standards must be set higher for NCAA schools and college coaches than for those not directly affiliated with the NCAA.

**[Recommended to NCAA Working Groups: (1) Apparel companies; (2) Non-scholastic basketball; and (3) Association-wide issues]**

- III. Student-Athlete Education and Development. Develop minimal professional standards that NCAA coaches will be required to meet to ensure they are prepared for their roles as educators and leaders in the development of student-athletes. Such standards could require the completion of different levels of coaching licenses or professional certificates to redress the profession's lax—and in some cases nonexistent—certification and licensure standards.

**Background:** The Commission on College Basketball concluded that “NCAA schools are not doing enough to develop the next generation of coaches.” The Knight Commission agrees with that conclusion and makes its recommendation to address this critical shortcoming in all sports.

Concerning basketball, USA Basketball currently provides a coaching certification program for youth basketball coaches. Coaches of youth teams playing in NCAA-certified basketball events for recruiting purposes are required to have a USA Basketball coaching license, which requires a background check and completion of a “SafeSport” course. More than 23,000 youth basketball coaches were certified by USA Basketball last year and 19,000 of those certifications were connected to coaches who completed the certification to have their teams play in NCAA-certified events. While USA Basketball has a similar requirement for the 10 or so college coaches annually who coach their national teams, the NCAA does not require any minimal standard for coaches of NCAA basketball teams.

The Knight Commission is concerned about the implications of the National Association of Basketball Coaches’ proposal to allow non-coaching personnel, such as basketball video analysts, to engage in coaching activities. While the Knight Commission supports professional development efforts, it cautions against any changes that will lead to further proliferation of coaching staff members and the inability to enforce reasonable personnel limits. The ratio of money spent on coaching and noncoaching personnel, compared to other program areas and student-athlete support, is already badly skewed.

**[Recommended to NCAA Working Groups: (1) Student-athlete support; (2) Association-wide issues and (3) Non-scholastic basketball]**

IV. NBA draft eligibility rule. The Knight Commission supports the Commission on College Basketball suggestion for the NBA and its players association to change the NBA draft eligibility rule but cautions that allowing students to turn pro without a high school diploma could undermine educational attainment among high school players.

**[Recommended to NCAA Working Groups: (1) NBA-related issues and (2) Student-athlete support]**

### **About the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics**

*The Knight Commission was formed by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in October 1989 to promote reforms that support and strengthen the educational mission of college sports. To preserve the Commission’s independence, the foundation continues to be its sole supporter, but does not control, or attempt to control, the Commission’s opinions or pronouncements. Over the years, the NCAA has adopted a number of the Commission’s recommendations, including the rule that requires teams to be on track to graduate at least 50 percent of their players to be eligible for postseason competition. The Commission [provides extensive financial data on its website about Division I college sports](#) in order to enhance transparency for college sports revenues and expenditures.*