



Knight Commission On Intercollegiate Athletics

KNIGHT COMMISSION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS RESPONDS TO NCAA PRESIDENT MARK EMMERT'S REMARKS ON DIVISION I REFORM

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Numerous media outlets have reported on NCAA President Mark Emmert's criticism this week of the Knight Commission's recent report, "[Transforming the D-I Model](#)." In his State of College Sports address on January 12, Emmert, appearing to refer to our proposal to separate the sport of FBS football from the NCAA, said that some have suggested "we should even take that part that's most entertaining and most lucrative, and carve it off the Association, set it over here and turn that into a pure entertainment industry with paid professionals."

Those comments do not accurately represent our proposal. In fact, the Knight Commission report explicitly outlines [a set of principles](#) for its proposed new governance entity for FBS football that would prohibit making FBS football players "paid professionals."

The Commission recommended this new governing entity be anchored to FBS institutions' founding educational mission, while providing greater accountability to prioritize the education, health, safety, and success of FBS football players. If the Commission's recommendation for a separate governance for FBS football is implemented, a single entity would oversee FBS football, instead of the current fragmented decision-making structure, which fails to serve the best interests of Division I athletes and their universities.

At present, the College Football Playoff (CFP) Administration, LLC operates the lucrative national championship for FBS football, without any accountability to the NCAA governing structure. The CFP distributes nearly half a billion dollars a year outside of the NCAA structure to FBS schools, and its management board does not include any representation of college athletes.

The Knight Commission proposal would address this lack of accountability by requiring that CFP revenues – and not the NCAA March Madness revenues – support the national operation of the sport of FBS football, and would stipulate that governance of the sport should involve FBS athletes.

Under the Commission's proposal, NCAA governance would instead be reorganized around basketball – the sport offered by all Division I members and the sport that provides nearly all NCAA revenues. This new governance structure would provide equal voting power to its Division I members, in contrast to the current system, which gives more power to FBS football schools, even though FBS football does not contribute any revenues to the NCAA and accounts for just 8 percent of all Division I athletes.

College presidents can reach different opinions about the merits of our reform proposal, and the Commission invites healthy debate, based on the facts. The NCAA Division I Board of Directors charged the 32-member Presidential Forum, a group representing every Division I conference, to examine the sustainability of Division I. We appreciated the time this influential group provided to us on January 12 and the seriousness with which they are conducting their charge.

We look forward to continued discussion of our recommendations with college sports leaders and athletes, including President Emmert, and share the belief of many that the status quo is unacceptable and the governance of Division I needs transformational change.