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January 6, 2021

President Mark Emmert
Chief Executive Officer
NCAA

RE: MAAC Council of Presidents Support of Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics proposal on Transforming the NCAA Division I Model

Dear Mark,

Happy New Year! I hope the New Year finds you healthy, well and safe. In December, the MAAC presidents held a meeting with representatives of the Knight Commission to be more fully informed on their efforts in advocating for a new governance model. We are very supportive of the concepts presented and offer our support in the Commission's efforts to initiate these changes through NCAA legislation. We strongly suggest the use of the NCAA's President's Forum for review of these proposals and respectfully ask Board of Governors review these proposed changes as well.

In follow up conversations with the MAAC Council of Presidents, the following items were discussed and offered for consideration by the Commission:

- The MAAC presidents agree that bold change is needed in the current fragmented governance of Division I athletics.
- The Council also agrees that college and university presidents must lead this change and will encourage presidential colleagues in other conferences to review/support Commission's recommendations. The MAAC supports a view that reinforcing the role of presidential leadership and accountability aligns college athletics with the NCAA's core principle of strengthening athlete education, health and safety. The MAAC would further offer that it is important to us that the Commission's recommendations can be advanced by university presidents, rather than through Congressional action.
- The MAAC leadership appreciates the Knight Commission's heavily researched report that correctly identifies the problems and recommends solutions to address those problems in ways that will improve Division I college sports for all NCAA Division I sports and universities.
- The MAAC agrees that actions must happen quickly: there is increasing legislative and judicial involvement, and diminishing public confidence, in NCAA decision-making. The MAAC is advancing this same opinion to the NCAA regarding its on-going Sustainability of the DI Model study. The MAAC leadership urges the Association's schedule for completion of this process be accelerated as the summer of 2022 is too late given the escalating timeline of the legislative proposals at federal and state levels.

- We agree with the compelling case made by the Commission that FBS institutions should not continue to operate their football championship separately from the NCAA, while simultaneously influencing all NCAA actions through weighted voting.
- Equal voting in governance, organized around basketball conference membership, will permit Division I to align around common values, and to focus on the Association's primary revenue generating sport. Such decentering of the governance model on equal voting is essential given the lessons learned from the current weighted voting model and unequal representation on the DI Board of Directors.
- The MAAC understands the Commission's recommended governance principles that make clear that under the recommended new structure, all institutions should demonstrate and advance commitments to bolster gender equity and must continue compliance with Title IX and other applicable laws and regulations.
- The MAAC strongly supports the Commission recommendation that the NCAA's revenue distribution formula be revised in the near term under the current governance structure. Specifically, the recommended change would eliminate the exemption that allows FBS football to count in the NCAA's distribution calculation, even though that sport does not meet the qualifying criterion, which is that the NCAA operate the sport's national championship. The assessment conducted for the Knight Commission by CLA, a national services firm, estimates that counting FBS football and its scholarships in the NCAA's calculation total directs more than \$60 million in distributions to FBS schools— an amount that could be reallocated to all Division I schools according to NCAA values-based incentives. The MAAC and other mid major conferences have lived with the current formula because of agreement struck between all conferences to utilize it in return for guaranteed access to all NCAA DI Championships and for all conferences being represented on the NCAA Council (albeit with unequal voting rights) However, with the huge influx of funding to the A5 conferences from the College Football Playoffs which is not shared between all 32 conferences it is time to revise the NCAA revenue distribution formula.

Please let me know what next steps are necessary from the MAAC Council of Presidents to support your efforts on transforming the model.

Sincerely,



James J. Maher, C.M.

President of the MAAC Council of Presidents

CC: MAAC Council of Presidents

Dr. Brian Hemphill, Chair, NCAA DI Presidential Forum

K. Lennon, NCAA

MAAC Committee on Athletic Administration

J. Grasso, Deputy Commissioner/SWA

G. Clifton, MAAC Legal Counsel