

FACT SHEET

Purpose

The purpose of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics is to develop, promote and lead transformational change that prioritizes the education, health, safety, and success of college athletes.

Overview

The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics is an independent group with a legacy of leading reforms that strengthen the educational mission of college sports.

The [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation formed the Commission](#) in October 1989 to recommend a reform agenda in response to highly visible athletics scandals and low graduation rates for college football and men's basketball players that threatened the integrity of higher education.

The Commission is [composed of current and former university presidents and chancellors, university trustees and former college athletes, as well as nationally-regarded thought leaders from organizations with ties to or involvement in higher education or college sports.](#)

William C. Friday and Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, two icons in higher education, were the founding co-chairmen and provided leadership for the Commission's 1991 seminal report, [Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics](#). This report provided a roadmap for reform and was quickly embraced by higher education leaders. It proposed a new "one-plus-three" model for governing intercollegiate athletics: presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification. By the late 1990s, the NCAA had enacted a majority of the Commission's recommendations to strengthen academic standards and improve athletics governance.

Subsequent [reports](#) and recommendations continue to influence and contribute to positive change. Among the Commission's recommendations that led to major [policy changes](#): requiring teams to be on track to graduate at least 50 percent of their players to be eligible for NCAA postseason championships and bowl games and including academic incentives in the NCAA's revenue distribution plan.

The Knight Commission also has long had an impact on the governance of college sports—from its successful push in the 1990s to [influencing the addition of independent directors to the NCAA's highest governing board](#).

The Commission's recent efforts and research have helped shape public and internal discussion about the principles and policies guiding college sports, including [rules to allow college athletes to earn compensation from the use of their name, image and likeness](#) and [approaches](#) to transform the D-I Model.

The Commission's [meetings](#) provide a public platform for thoughtful discussion of the most pressing issues facing college sports.

The Commission's interactive College Athletics Financial Information (CAFI) database (cafidatabase.knightcommission.org) is a user-friendly tool creating greater financial transparency for where the money comes from and where the money goes in college sports.

All reports, news releases, studies and white papers can be accessed on knightcommission.org. You can follow us on Twitter [@KnightAthletics](#).