



# Knight Commission On Intercollegiate Athletics

A PROJECT OF THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

## **Altering NCAA Revenue Distribution To Correct for Racial Inequity**

Presentation to Knight Commission  
May 16, 2022

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## Purpose statement:

*“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.**”*



# Knight Commission Recommendations (May 2021)

## Achieving Racial Equity: Moving from Pledges to Policy

### Achieving Racial Equity IN COLLEGE SPORTS

*A New Report by the Knight Commission  
on Intercollegiate Athletics*



1. **Closing educational opportunity gaps** to create an equitable pathway for Black athletes' success during and after college.
2. **Holding institutions accountable in recruitment and hiring** to achieve diversity and equity in athletics leadership.
3. **Investing in programs that support and enhance Black athletes' college experience** and promote inclusion and belonging.
4. **Creating more equitable opportunities for Black athletes to assume leadership roles**, especially in advocacy and governance.



## Racial Equity Recommendations – Actions Taken To Date

1. The NCAA should eliminate the standardized test to determine first-year athletics eligibility.
2. To determine first-year athletics eligibility, the NCAA should implement a holistic evaluation process, based on learning sciences research and best admission practices, that places emphasis on an athlete's high school academic record, including high school grade point average and satisfactory completion of high school core courses.

Status: In April 2022, the NCAA DI Council introduced legislation into the 2022-23 legislative cycle, recommended by the Committees on Academics, **to remove the standardized test score requirement from initial-eligibility requirements.** This legislation will be voted on at the Council's January 2023 meeting.



## Racial Equity Recommendations – Actions Taken To Date

3. The NCAA should require institutions to designate the equivalent of the “senior woman administrator” position to represent the interests of athletes of color.

Status: NCAA Council with support from NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interest Committee and Men’s and Women’s Basketball Oversight Committees advanced a proposal in NCAA Legislative Cycle that **requires conferences and institutions to designate a senior minority athletics administrator.**

4. The Knight Commission will fund independent research to examine if institutions with large racial graduation gaps in GSR scores in one or more sports are qualifying for financial awards through the NCAA’s new academic incentive program, and if so, whether the NCAA should institute an additional standard or filter for institutions to receive funding for meeting academic benchmarks.

Status: May 16 presentation of research.



# **Overview of Financial Incentives tied to Academic Success**



# NCAA Academic Performance Fund

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TIED TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS



**\$1.1 BN**

Between **2021 and 2032**, more than **\$1.1 billion** is dedicated to reward institutions for the academic and graduation success of their teams.

## Key Points:

- Knight Commission first recommended academic incentives in **2001** with ongoing advocacy until adoption in **2016**
- **\$1.1B** is a significant allocation for academic success



## NCAA Academic Performance Fund Criteria (2016)

Academic Unit is achieved by meeting the benchmark in any ONE of THREE standards

**Academic  
Progress Rate  
(APR)  
985**

**OR**

**Graduation  
Success Rate  
(GSR)  
90%**

**OR**

**Federal Graduation Rate  
(Student-Athlete vs. Student Body)  
13 percentage points higher  
for Student-Athlete vs. Student Body**

- Benchmark based on top quartile of schools in 2015
- Utilizes single-year data (not multi-year) and all sports are aggregated with equal weighting for each sport
- Thresholds originally selected so that approximately 2/3 of membership achieve an Academic Unit



# Institutional Academic Performance has Improved

## Evaluating by the 75<sup>th</sup> Percentile

Academic Unit Standard	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile 2015	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile 2019
<b>GSR</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>APR</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>989</b>
<b>Federal Graduation Rate</b> (% difference between Student-Athlete & Student Body)	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>



# Institutional Academic Performance has Improved

## Number and Percentage of Division I Institutions Qualifying for Each of the Three Standards

Benchmark	2015		2019	
	# of institutions	% of institutions	# of institutions	% of institutions
<b>APR <math>\geq</math> 985</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>GSR <math>\geq</math> 90%</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>SA-SB Diff <math>\geq</math> 13%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Total number of qualifying schools</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>79%</b>



# Gap Between Division I Black and White GSR

## All 350 DI Institutions

(all sports)

Gap Between Black and White GSR	2019	
	# of institutions	% of institutions
Less than 10%	196	56%
11-20%	87	25%
21-25%	20	6%
26-30%	19	6%
31-40%	11	3%
41-50%	10	3%
Greater than 50%	7	2%



**Example:**  
 In 2019, 56% of all Division I institutions had less than a 10 percentage point gap between Black and White GSR.





What would be the result of a **new Racial Equity Standard** as a filter to achieve academic units?

**Racial Equity Standard =**

A designated maximum percentage point gap between Black and White college athlete Graduation Success Rates (GSR) among qualifying institutions

## Impact of a Racial Equity Standard:

A maximum percentage gap between Black and White college athlete Graduation Success Rates (GSR)

Overall institutions qualified	2019	
	# of institutions	% of institutions
No Racial Equity Standard	278	79%
20% maximum gap	211	60%
25% maximum gap	231	66%
30% maximum gap	250	71%
40% maximum gap	261	75%

- If the 25 percentage point maximum gap between Black and White college athlete GSR's had been applied in 2019, **231** institutions would qualify for the academic unit.
- Data should be evaluated on a regular basis (or at least every four years)
- Goal is to move toward decreasing the percentage gap allowed.



# Estimated Impact of a Racial Equity Standard by DI Subdivision (based 2019 data)

DI Subdivision Breakdown	Academic Unit Qualifiers		Estimated Academic Unit Qualifiers using new Standard (25 percentage point gap)	
	# of institutions	% of institutions	# of institutions	% of institutions
Overall DI	278	79%	231	66%
FBS	100	77%	82	63%
Autonomy	54	83%	49	75%
Non-Autonomy	46	71%	33	51%
FCS	95	77%	81	66%
No MFB	83	86%	68	70%
HBCU	11	48%	11	48%

**Example:**  
In 2019, **100** FBS institutions qualified for the Academic Unit. If the Racial Equity Standard had been applied, **82** FBS institutions would have qualified for the Academic Unit.





# A NEW Knight Commission Recommendation To Improve NCAA Revenue Distribution to Address Racial Equity

## First Standard (new)

**Racial Equity Standard:**  
Gap between Black and White College Athletes is no more than 25 percentage points

+ Existing Standards

**Academic Progress Rate (APR)**  
985

OR

**Graduation Success Rate (GSR)**  
90%

OR

**Federal Graduation Rate (Student-Athlete vs. Student Body)**  
13 percentage points higher for Student-Athlete vs. Student Body

**RESULT**

**INSTITUTION RECEIVES THE ACADEMIC UNIT**