



# Knight Commission On Intercollegiate Athletics

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

## **Statement from Knight Commission CEO Amy Privette Perko, January 15, 2025**

The Knight Commission commends the NCAA Division I membership for voting unanimously to begin awarding financial incentives for women’s basketball team appearances and victories in the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament. The historic vote is both welcome and long overdue — the NCAA has provided similar performance awards for the success of Division I men’s basketball programs in March Madness for several decades. The Commission called on NCAA and Division I leaders to make this policy change at the [national level three years ago](#).

The Division I membership vote is a step in the right direction yet does not equalize performance incentives at the March Madness tournament for men’s and women’s basketball teams—victories by men’s teams will still earn much larger awards. However, three Division I conferences – the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, the Southern Conference, and the Big Sky Conference – reward March Madness victories by women’s basketball teams at a dollar level equal to that of their men’s teams, demonstrating their commitment to rewarding performance by men’s and women’s basketball teams equally.

The Commission’s [C.A.R.E. Champion program](#) recognizes these three conferences as leaders among their peers in their commitment to gender equity. Providing gender equitable incentives is one of the standards for achieving the C.A.R.E. Champion distinction, which includes meeting other values-based criteria that integrate education-based principles in financial incentives and athletics spending. These three conferences deserve special recognition for demonstrating that commissioners and college presidents can value success for their women’s teams just as much as for their men’s teams.