



Knight Commission On Intercollegiate Athletics

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

Fall Meeting Celebrates C.A.R.E. Model Conferences and Addresses *House* Settlement, Title IX, Athlete-Employment Cases, and New DI Model

C.A.R.E. Champions & C.A.R.E. Model Conference Grant Recipients Announced



Knight Commission Co-Chairs Pam Bernard (far left) and Len Elmore (far right) with Michael Cross of The Southern Conference and Travis Tellitocci of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, certified as C.A.R.E. Champion conferences, and with Tom Wistrick, Commissioner of the Big Sky Conference, a recipient of the C.A.R.E. Model Conference Grant.

**C.A.R.E.
MODEL**



**RECOGNITION
VIDEO**

September 18, 2024 — Washington, D.C. — The Knight Commission announced C.A.R.E. Model recognitions for three Division I conferences – The Southern Conference, the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, and the Big Sky Conference. Additionally, expert panelists and Division I leaders provided critical analyses and proposals for the future of Division I college sports.

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"Impact of proposed *House* settlement and college athlete-employment cases, including a discussion of Title IX" panelists (left to right), Gabe Feldman, Janet Judge, and Jill Bodensteiner

On whether the House v. NCAA settlement impacts athlete employment cases:

"The House settlement is an antitrust case... It cannot and does not, regardless of the terms of the settlement, impact the determination of employee status of college athletes under the FLSA or the NLRA, that will be determined in Federal Court, by the NLRB, eventually maybe by the Supreme Court."

Gabe Feldman, Director, Tulane University Sports Law Program

On the factor of "control" impacting determinations that college athletes may be employees:

"I would encourage the practitioners...in athletic departments [to] ask where are you on control in your department, and is it reasonable or unreasonable?"

Jill Bodensteiner, Vice President and Director of Athletics, St. Joseph's University

Resource: [Institutions should examine these control factors](#) presented in Session 2

On a discussion of Title IX and impact of potential new revenue sharing payments (e.g. "fund payments") in House v. NCAA settlement:

"As noted earlier, Title IX expressly includes opportunities and benefits associated with athletics participation. Fund payments clearly are both athletics opportunities and benefits of participation, and I would say just as education related as barbershop chairs, gaming systems, DJ's, and sleeping pods in locker rooms, and those are all covered under Title IX."

"...In short, I believe the question is not whether Title IX applies, but rather how Title IX will apply."

Janet Judge, Attorney, Partner, Education & Sports Law Group LLC



"Designing a new model for D-I college sports in the face of legal realities" panelists (left to right), Meredith Page, Anthony Egbo, Jr., Janet Cone, and Michael Cross

On access to D-I championships, uniform playing rules, and preserving crucial revenue streams:

"Our conferences and schools want access to Division I championships. We need to have consistent playing rules and agree on what those rules are going to look like. Then the third piece is...preserving the crucial revenue streams that are funding Division I athletics right now at the conference level."

Michael Cross, Commissioner, The Southern Conference

Resource: [Recommended NCAA Division I Framework](#)

On the criteria for athletes to benefit from the education-based model of college athletics:

"For athletes to be student-athletes, institutional leaders are going to need to focus on three primary things: one, we have to rebalance the level of control over student-athletes; two, create greater clarity, understanding, and measure how student-athletes and their institutions benefit from athletic programs; [and], three, reframe college athletics through a higher education lens by transforming the college athletic experience into part of the educational mission and academic experience."

Janet Cone, Senior Administrator for University Enterprises & Athletics Director, UNC Asheville



On changes to governance where college athletes have input and influence over their own experiences:

"Creating an opportunity for student-athletes to have influence on and vote on conference-specific issues that directly affect their experiences is something we are standing here and earnestly advocating for. We, the student-athletes, believe that we should have a direct role in shaping our experiences...within the system at every level of governance."

Anthony Egbo, Jr., Vice-Chair, NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee former football college athlete, Abilene Christian University

"We need to instill a governance around the student-athlete experience. Having them seriously involved at every single level by providing student-athletes with a systematic avenue to mediate and resolve their conflicts. After all, they're the ones that feel the impact the most; from the most minute changes to the most overarching bylaws, we feel it."
Meredith Page, Vice-Chair, NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee,
volleyball college athlete, Radford University

Big Sky Conference, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, and The Southern Conference Earn Inaugural C.A.R.E. Model Recognitions

The Knight Commission announced that the Big Sky Conference, the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), and The Southern Conference are the recipients of its inaugural C.A.R.E. Model Conference Grants. The grants support their commitment to the C.A.R.E. Model principles in their distribution and use of shared athletics revenues.



The Knight Commission recognized the MAAC and The Southern Conference as the nation's first C.A.R.E. Champions by fully implementing all the C.A.R.E. Model requirements, which prioritize the education and well-being of college athletes while integrating education-based principles in financial incentives and athletics spending.

[Full press release on C.A.R.E. Champions and C.A.R.E. Model Recognitions](#)

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