



Knight Commission On Intercollegiate Athletics

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

Impacting the Future of College Sports

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Summary of Protect College Sports Act of 2026

The Knight Commission produced an [educational resource](#) summarizing key components of the Protect College Sports Act (PCSA) of 2026. The PCSA was reported out of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation on June 18, 2026, by a bipartisan vote of 19-9. Updates were made to this summary August 31, 2026. Senate debate on voting to proceed to the bill is scheduled to begin no later than September 23.

Follow Commission updates on PCSA [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS | MARK YOUR CALENDAR



November 10-11 — *"The Governance Challenge in College Athletics"*
hosted by AGB and sponsored by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics,
Washington, D.C.

[Details and registration](#)



November 17 — Knight Commission Public Meeting, Washington, D.C.
Details coming soon

Five Division I Conferences Repeat as C.A.R.E. Champions

The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics

announced that five Division I conferences qualified for grants and recognition through the Knight Commission's C.A.R.E. Model Conference Grant program by meeting the criteria for connecting athletics revenues with the educational model of college sports.



The Metro Conference and The Southern Conference are recognized as C.A.R.E. Champions for a third consecutive year, and The America East Conference, the Patriot League, and The Summit League continue as C.A.R.E. Champion Conferences for a second year. Each conference received financial awards to recognize and support its ongoing commitment to the C.A.R.E. Model principles in the distribution and use of shared athletics revenues.

The Educational Value of Athletics: A Mission-Based Paradigm

Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning | July-August 2026
by Jonathan Alger



Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics member Jonathan Alger explores the educational value of athletics in his new article, "The Educational Value of Athletics: A Mission-Based Paradigm," published in *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*.

Alger's article examines sports performance as a legitimate academic major, minor, or certificate program grounded in the liberal arts – offering a powerful framework for rethinking athletics as a

Read the article [here](#).

Jonathan Alger is the inaugural America 250 Fellow for the American Council on Education and the American Association of Colleges & Universities. He previously served as president of American University and James Madison University. Alger has a background in higher education law and policy.

KNIGHT-NEWHOUSE COLLEGE ATHLETICS DATABASE IN THE NEWS



The *Associated Press* cites the Knight-Newhouse College Athletics Database in its calculation that operating expenses at public Division I athletics programs rose by nearly a third over the past four years – “notably outpacing revenue and running up deficits...” The [article](#) links the national-level trend of costs outrunning revenue to the underlying pressure driving states to step in with taxpayer funding through various measures (e.g., sports betting revenue earmarks, facility debt funding, campus auxiliary funding).

KNIGHT-NEWHOUSE COLLEGE ATHLETICS DATABASE IN THE NEWS



Knight Commission CEO Amy Privette Perko was quoted in an [article](#) about the [Government Accountability Office's](#) report that athletic departments are financially dependent on college students and institutions to compensate for deficits. Perko told *Inside Higher Ed* that the GAO report “sounds alarm bells for campus leaders about financial trends for college sports that will require tough decision-making.”



Through *InvestigateTV* public record requests and data supplied by the Knight-Newhouse College Athletics Database, InvestigateTV [analyzed the most recent five years spending](#) of the 109 public schools that have been members of the FBS since the 2019-2020 school year....Last year, only 10 athletic departments operated without financial backing from student fees or their universities, InvestigateTV found....At 14 other schools – all from the smaller non-Power 4 conferences – the money from students and university coffers represented at least two-thirds of athletic budgets... Since 2019, the total amount of student fees and general funds that flowed into athletics increased 40%. “College athletics are in crisis,” Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Washington, said during a hearing on the state of big-time college sports. “The system is broken and unsustainable.”

Additional Knight-Newhouse College Athletics Database Resources:

[Access Database Here](#)

[FY2025 Research Findings](#)

[2026 Webinar Tutorial](#)

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Knight Commission | 2850 Tigertail Avenue Suite 600 | Miami, FL 33133 US