

NCAA Division I Framework Related To an Incentives and Disincentives Structure

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[Note: This summary is intended to reflect the work and final recommendations of the NCAA Division I Management Council Working Group on Incentives/Disincentives.

In its April 2002 resolution outlining the academic reform package, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors instructed that a system of incentives and disincentives be developed that rewards those sports teams that do well academically and penalizes those that do not.

In order for an incentives and disincentives structure to be meaningful, it must be directly tied to the “benefits” of the Association. For those sports teams and athletics programs that perform at an acceptable level academically, the benefits can be realized; for those sports teams and athletics programs that perform at an unacceptable level academically, those assets would be denied or restricted. The “assets” include access to: (1) Preseason and postseason competition; (2) A full array of athletics scholarships; (3) Recruiting opportunities; and (4) Active membership status. It is anticipated that future discussions may include distribution of NCAA revenues as part of the incentives and disincentives structure.

Several key principles have emerged when discussing the incentives and disincentives structure:

1. The goal should be, first and foremost, to encourage improved academic performance of all student-athletes on all sports teams so the mission of the NCAA and the commitment to our student-athletes can be better realized.
2. The structure must appropriately penalize those programs that have a demonstrated history (“habitual” offenders) of academic underachievement. Conversely, those institutions performing at a significantly high rate academically should be rewarded.
3. All Division I athletics programs and sports teams should be subject to the incentives/disincentives structure. This includes Division I sports offered at Divisions II and III institutions.
4. The incentives and disincentives structure must be fair and credible.
5. The incentives and disincentives structure should be as straightforward and understandable as possible.

Incentives/Disincentives: Impact on Student-Athletes, Sports Teams and Athletics Programs

It is envisioned that a series of incentives and disincentives will be applied at three levels: individual student-athletes, sports teams and athletics programs.

