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DATE: March 12, 2007
TO: Division I Management Council
FROM: Carol Iwaoka, Associate Commissioner, Big Ten Conference
SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Legislation for Bowl Eligibility

On behalf of the Big East, Big Ten, Pacific-10, Mid-American, Southeastern, Sun Belt, and Western Athletic conferences, I am writing to request the Division I Management Council consider the attached proposal during its April meeting to enact permanent legislation for eligibility requirements for bowl games (See Attachment A). The proposal is in response to an ARS blanket waiver that was granted in November 2006 to address the competitive inequity that results if a bowl occurs before or after classes begin in January (See Attachment B). Under NCAA legislation, teams playing in bowls before classes begin are "between terms" and apply only the 6-unit rule for student-athletes in their final season. Teams playing in bowl games after classes begin are required to recertify all team members under academic progress, GPA, five-year rule, mid-year enrollee requirements, etc. Thus, it is possible for two teams playing in the same bowl game to be certified under different NCAA requirements as some bowls are now scheduled into the second week in January.

The proposed permanent change would be applicable to FBS teams only. It is consistent with the terms of the approved ARS waiver that required student-athletes be certified only under the 6-unit rule for postseason eligibility/bowl games and full-time enrollment provisions for student-athletes who have begun classes. It should be noted that if Proposal 2006-60 is adopted, the proposal would be modified accordingly consistent with the approval granted (i.e., to apply the 6-unit requirement for bowl eligibility; thus, 06-60 if enacted would apply the 6-unit rule to all student-athletes and not just to those in their final season).

However, the ARS waiver was granted for the 2007 bowl season only and noted that a permanent legislative change should be in place to address these concerns for the 2007-08 season and beyond:

2008	Jan 3 – Orange; Jan 7- National Championship game
2009	Jan 5 – Fiesta; Jan 8 – National Championship game
2010	Jan 4 – Fiesta; Jan 5 – Orange; Jan TBD –National Championship game

While recognizing the request for emergency review in April may be unusual, this appears to be the appropriate time for Management Council action as the regular cycle would not produce a legislative change prior to the 2007-08 bowl season; the Management Council does not meet in July; and action in April ensures that student-athletes and institutions have closure on the applicable eligibility standards for bowl games prior to the start of fall 2007 classes.

This proposal also has the support of the Big 12 conference. It is also possible that other FBS conferences may co-sign as sponsors prior to the April Management Council meeting. The sponsors appreciate your time, consideration, and support of this proposal at your upcoming meeting.

C: Commissioners, FBS Conferences
David Berst
Beth DeBauche