

**Progress Report of the
Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group
(As of May 27, 2008)**

Background.

During its April 2007, meeting, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors approved the formation of an NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group, a working group composed of presidents and chancellors, head coaches, commissioners, directors of athletics and faculty athletics representatives, which was established to develop strategies to enhance academic performance and graduation rates in NCAA Division I men's basketball. Graduation rates in men's basketball are among the lowest in Division I, and the then impending elimination of the small squad adjustment was expected to further impact the sport. The academic preparation of men's basketball student-athletes is unique from many other sports, and overall, they are less prepared academically than student-athletes who participate in other sports. It was essential, therefore, that NCAA constituent groups work together to evaluate the causes and develop meaningful strategies to improve academic performance. The success of a similar group in baseball and discussions involving head basketball coaches and representatives of several governance committees and NCAA staff at the 2007 Men's Final Four supported the establishment of the Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group as a meaningful step toward identifying solutions.

The Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group was directed to develop appropriate recommendations for consideration by the Division I membership within a timeline of approximately 12 to 18 months. The group was provided a charge to:

1. Analyze available data, research and literature regarding the academic performance trends of Division I men's basketball student-athletes.
2. Identify characteristics and factors in the sport that may be serving to impair the academic performance of Division I men's basketball student-athletes.
3. Identify changes that would enhance academic progress and graduation rates in Division I men's basketball.
4. Submit to the Division I Board of Directors, no later than the end of 2008, a set of recommendations and proposals that would enhance APR and graduation rates in Division I men's basketball.
5. Maintain ongoing communication with, and seek reactions from, the NCAA governance structure, and the National Association of Basketball Coaches [NABC] membership and conference offices during the course of the project.

The Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group conducted its initial meeting in Indianapolis at the national office in August 2007, and agreed that the project could most

effectively be accomplished through the use of subcommittees. The following subcommittees were formed and charged with identifying and developing potential solutions, legislative and non-legislative, for consideration by the full group.

1. Subcommittee on Academic Preparation and Academic Support.
2. Subcommittee on Coach/Player Relationships.
3. Subcommittee on Playing and Practice Seasons.
4. Subcommittee on Transfers – Both Incoming and Outgoing.
5. Subcommittee on the 0 for 2 Phenomenon.

The subcommittees have conducted several meetings, both in-person and by conference call and have developed preliminary recommendations/solutions specific to their respective areas. During its April 25th in-person meeting the full group again convened and discussed the subcommittee's recommendations in detail, offered additional comments and suggestions and began to develop some preliminary consensus positions on some of the recommended solutions. The following information sets forth the current progress of the Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group to date. It should be emphasized that this is a progress report and many of the recommendations as well as consensus positions are likely to undergo additional discussion and consideration prior to being put forth as a final recommendation/position of the full group. Continued discussion will occur during the summer as well as solicitation of feedback from various constituencies in the Division I governance structure. The Division I Men's Basketball Academic Enhancement Group is scheduled to convene as full group on August 8th, at which time it is anticipated that the group will be prepared to make final recommendations. A final report including the group's recommendations will be prepared shortly thereafter and provided to the Board of Directors for consideration at its October 30th meeting.

Recommendations Receiving Preliminary Support.

1. **Proposed Academic Preparation, Enhancement and Summer Access Model - Mandatory Summer School.**

Background and Rationale. The full group supported a proposed academic preparation and enhancement model that involves summer school attendance and summer access for Division I men's basketball student-athletes. The primary intent of this recommendation is to increase academic performance. It is important to emphasize athletics access that has an academic nexus tied to it. This model proposes a playing and practice season structure that is designed to encourage greater academic commitment, while also providing an opportunity for coaches and student-athletes to interact and enhance the coach/player relationship throughout the academic year and summer.

Data reviewed by the group indicates that student-athletes who enroll in summer school, particularly early in their academic career are far likely to make appropriate academic progress toward their degrees during their playing career. [See Attachment No.1], In addition, a survey of Division I men's basketball student-athletes attending summer school revealed that time spent on athletically related activities while enrolled in summer school has been approximately 10-11 hours on a weekly basis. Thus, the ability to engage in such activities in a more structured environment under the supervision of the coaching staff will not increase the status quo during the summer, but could prove beneficial in the establishing a stronger coach/player relationship in a less pressured environment. A definition of summer access and summer school requirements have been included to assist in understanding a practical application of the model. It is designed both for individuals during the summer prior to initial full-time enrollment and continuing student-athletes.

- a. **Summer School Requirements.** Current financial aid legislation permits institutions to provide athletics aid for the summer prior to initial full-time enrollment under several conditions in NCAA Bylaw 15.2.8.1.4. Further, NCAA Bylaw 15.2.8 and its subsections, outline legislation related to summer financial aid for enrolled student-athletes.

The proposed definition of required summer school includes a requirement that all student-athletes, who have signed financial aid agreements to receive athletically related financial aid for the ensuing regular academic year, be enrolled in a minimum of six hours of acceptable degree credit. Consistent with the provisions of Bylaw 14.4.3.4.4, such hours may include remedial courses, provided the courses are prerequisites for specific courses acceptable for any degree program. Institutions that offer athletically related financial aid would be required to provide financial aid to these student-athletes to attend the summer session. Further, institutions must provide such student-athletes life skills education (e.g., course, seminar, training session). The provisions of NCAA Bylaw 15.2.8.1.4 would continue to apply to individuals during the summer prior to initial full-time enrollment, except that such an individual would be permitted to engage in athletics activities, as defined in the ensuing section entitled, "Definition of Summer Access."

An exception would be provided to those institutions that do not offer summer courses to the general student body. However, such institutions would not be able to take advantage of the summer athletics access component of this model. Further, institutions that offer summer courses, but do not offer any athletically related financial aid [e.g., award only need-based aid] would have two options. The first option would be to use the previously noted exception applicable to institutions that do not offer summer courses to the general student body. Institutions electing to use this option would not be required to award summer financial aid, but also would be prohibited from participation in summer athletics access. The second option would be available for those institutions who wish to participate in the summer athletics access. These institutions would be subject to the mandatory summer aid requirement for those recruited student-athletes who qualify for nonathletically related aid to attend the summer session. The summer athletics access provisions of this model would be applicable to those student-athletes enrolled in a minimum of six hours of acceptable degree credit and who are receiving nonathletically related financial assistance or covering their own cost of summer school.

- b. **Definition of Summer Access.** Under current legislation, coaches and student-athletes are limited in the amount of time spent on athletics activities and the nature of those activities during the regular academic year and institutional vacation periods, including the summer. Specifically, it is not permissible for coaches and student-athletes to participate in countable athletically related activities during the summer vacation period.

The definition of summer access for this model is based on the use of required weight training, conditioning and individual skill instruction as avenues for summer athletics access. Individual skill instruction provides an opportunity for student-athletes and coaches to work together to improve aspects of the student-athletes' individual skill in a more intimate structure. The focus on individual skill instruction addresses concerns from the men's basketball community regarding the importance of increased access to student-athletes during the summer, but prevents full team practice on a year-round basis.

The proposed definition would permit the allocation of eight hours per week as the maximum number of hours per week in which it would be permissible to engage in these activities, with no more than two hours devoted to skill-related instruction. This length of time is consistent with current legislation governing athletics activities outside the playing season during the academic year. Based on current legislation, the membership appears to accept eight hours per week as a reasonable balance between the academic and athletic needs of student-athletes while not imposing an undue burden on their time. Similarly, while cognizant of time demands issues that also exist during the summer, this proposed definition does not exceed eight required

hours per week in order to provide student-athletes sufficient time to engage in other pursuits.

In addition to identifying the appropriate maximum number of hours per week, the number of weeks during the summer in which access shall be permitted should be considered in the same manner. The proposed definition would specify a period of eight weeks of access at the institution's discretion. For comparison purposes, the identification of an eight-week period presents a consistent length of time as provided for in the football summer conditioning period. Consideration should also be given to academic needs and other time demands concerns in determining the eight-week period as appropriate for football. Likewise, the remaining time outside the eight-week period should be designated as student-athlete discretionary time as outlined in existing legislation in which a student-athlete can only participate in athletics activities at his or her discretion.

c. Summary of the Model's Concepts

- (1) All institutions would be required to provide summer financial aid for incoming and continuing men's basketball student-athletes, who have signed financial aid agreements to receive athletically related financial aid for the ensuing regular academic year, as an additional financial aid requirement of Division I membership. Financial aid must be awarded for a minimum of six hours. Institutions whose financial aid package includes an exceptional amount of Pell Grant assistance would be required to provide one half of the value of the summer financial aid to each recruited men's basketball student-athlete who has signed a financial aid agreement for the ensuing regular academic year. [Note: An exceptional amount of Pell Grant assistance is defined as those institutions that in a given academic year have an average per-student allotment of Pell Grant dollars for undergraduate students reported to the U.S. Department of Education the previous September that is more than one standard deviation above the mean for all reporting Division I membership institutions for that year].
- (2) Further, institutions would be required to provide such student-athletes life skills education (e.g., course, seminar, training session). Such educational activities should be organized in a manner to assist coaches with developing strategies for individual student-athletes, with a particular focus on career planning and "life after basketball" skills.
- (3) Upon summer enrollment, incoming recruited men's basketball student-athletes, who have signed financial aid agreements for the ensuing regular academic year, would be considered student-athletes under all NCAA legislation.

Currently, under NCAA Bylaw 13.02.11.1, these individuals are not subject to contact regulations in Bylaw 13 and are considered student-athletes only for purposes of Bylaw 16. They are considered prospective student-athletes for the remainder of Bylaw 13 and all other bylaws.

- (4) Enrollment in a minimum of six hours would be required as a prerequisite for athletics access during the summer. A waiver from the application of the mandatory attendances requirement would be available when unique circumstances preclude an incoming or continuing student-athlete from attending summer school. A student-athlete receiving a waiver of the mandatory attendance requirement would not be permitted to engage in the athletics access during the summer.
- (5) A credit-hour requirement would be established such that incoming and continuing men's basketball student-athletes, who have signed financial aid agreements to receive athletically related financial aid for the ensuing regular academic year, would be required to satisfactorily complete a minimum of six hours of academic credit during the summer as a prerequisite for eligibility in the fall term. A student-athlete who is not eligible for competition in the fall, based on unsuccessful completion of at least six hours during the summer, would be permitted to regain eligibility at the conclusion of the fall term, provided he meets all other applicable progress-toward-degree regulations. [Note: A nonqualifier must still complete an academic year of residence before being eligible for competition; however, he would be eligible for summer financial aid and athletics access during the summer prior to initial full-time collegiate enrollment.]
- (6) Discussions with the full group remain on-going as to whether institutions would be permitted to conduct required athletics activities [i.e., mandatory weight training, conditioning or individual skill-instruction] from the end of the institution's playing season until the week prior to the beginning of the institution's final examination period. It would remain permissible for student-athletes to participate in voluntary weight training and conditioning supervised by a strength and conditioning coach only for health and safety purposes [Note: Institutions that do not offer summer courses to the general student body and institutions that do not provide athletically related financial aid to student-athletes [and elect to use the exception] would be permitted to conduct mandatory weight training, conditioning and skill instruction after the end of the playing season until the week prior to the beginning of the institution's final examination period].

2. Proposed Playing and Practice Season Model. The group supported the following playing and practice season model that provides for a slight reduction in the number of games, a staggered schedule for the start of team practice and other legislative modifications designed to minimize missed class time during the season. The group believes that the implementation of a basic scheduling philosophy with the key components listed below will reduce missed class time during the playing season.

a. Preseason Conditioning and Practice.

(1) Permissible Preseason Conditioning Activities (Beginning of academic year).

The current rule that permits a men's basketball student-athletes to engage in a maximum of eight hours per week of conditioning or physical-fitness activities, of which not more than two hours may be spent on skill-related workouts, would remain unchanged.

(2) On -Court Team Practice Activities. Beginning October 1, instead of eight hours per week for conditioning or physical-fitness activities, an institution's men's basketball team shall be allowed to participate in activities as follows:

October 1-7: Of the 8 hours per week allowed for strength/conditioning and/or skill instruction, allow coaches the option to conduct on-court practice for a maximum of 4 of the 8 hours. All countable athletically related activities shall be prohibited during two calendar days.

October 8-14: Instead of 8 hours, increase the number of hours to 12 per week for strength/conditioning and/or skill instruction and allow coaches the option to conduct on-court practice for a maximum of 8 of the 12 hours. All countable athletically related activities shall be prohibited during two calendar days.

October 15: Regular team practice begins with 20 hours per week, with one day off per week during which no countable athletically related activities shall occur.

[Permitting institutions to utilize a “staggered schedule” for the start of team practice earlier (October 1 rather than mid-October) will allow: freshman student-athletes more time to become acclimated to college life, and for further development of the coach/player relationship prior to the beginning of the traditional on-court team practice time.]

- (3) **Missed Class Time Policies.** Policies must be implemented to limit missed class time due to athletics participation (e.g., student-athlete may not miss more than 10 percent of class meetings per semester due to athletics participation). Athletics participation schedules that include the amount of missed class time due to athletics participation must be approved prior to each semester by the faculty athletics representative or faculty oversight committee.

- b. **Practice Scrimmages/Exhibition games.** The group recommended modifications to the current legislation regarding informal preseason scrimmages to specify that such practice scrimmages shall not result in missed class time allowed by the student-athletes of the participating institutions.

- c. **Playing season.**
 - (1) An institution shall conduct regular-season games no earlier than start the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving.
 - (2) An institution shall conduct a maximum of 28 regular-season games over 14 weeks (two games per week for 14 weeks) or, a maximum of 26 games, if the institution participates in a Qualifying Regular-Season Multiple Team Event.
 - (3) An institution shall participate in no more than two games per week, except during holiday or vacation periods as defined in the institution's official catalog.
 - (4) An institution shall not participate in any games during the week of final exam period(s) as defined in the institution's official catalog.
 - (5) An institution shall not participate in more than one away from home regular season conference game Monday through Thursday of any given week.

3. Academic Progress Rate (APR) Policies.

Background and Rationale. Academic success within a particular sport or on specific teams likely occurs as a result of the interplay of many factors, including a student-athlete's academic profile, athletics time demands, personal factors (e.g., family finances), athletics opportunities (e.g., playing time, professional departure) and the level of commitment to academic success by players, coaches, administrators and others. The ultimate academic casualty occurs when a student-athlete fails academically and separates from the institution. Under such circumstances, not only does an individual student-athlete fall off track, but his team also loses 2 of 2 possible NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) points for his last academic term.

While the number of "0/2" student-athletes in NCAA Division I dropped over the last three years, the decrease occurred at a slower pace in the sport of men's basketball than in any other sport. By comparison, the number of "0/2" student-athletes in football and baseball dropped by 12 percent and 21 percent, respectively, from 2003-04 to 2005-06; however, the number of "0/2" student-athletes in men's basketball decreased by only 3%. Together, these three sports accounted for 49% of all "0/2" student-athletes nationally in 2005-06.

Trends in "0/2" performance by gender and ethnicity indicate higher percentages of male and ethnic minority student-athletes among those who depart and are ineligible to return. In addition, there are higher percentages of "0/2" student-athletes among those who transfer, particularly those who transfer from a two-year college to a four-year college. In each of the last three APR reporting years, between nine and 10 percent of two-year transfer student-athletes have lost both the eligibility (E) and retention (R) points for their teams.

General Observations Related to the Academic Progress of Division I Men's Basketball Student-Athletes.

- a. **Stronger connections to Head Coach.** Men's basketball players seem to have stronger connections to their head coaches and/or a style of play than to their programs or their institutions overall.
- b. **Head coaching change will occur when expectations are not met.** The subcommittee acknowledged there are times when a transition in personnel simply must be made for the short- and long-term health of the program. For example, institutional leadership may choose to replace a head coach to restore the program's competitive level, to make improvements to a team's APR, to turn around an unhealthy environment for players, or to meet expectations and goals of the institution and its alumni and supporters.

- c. **The "margin of error" is different in men's basketball.** The subcommittee acknowledged that, in the sport of men's basketball, the academic performance of only one or two players can significantly impact a team's APR.
- d. **Gravitational pull of professional basketball opportunities.** There are unique professional opportunities available to men's basketball student-athletes. Student-athletes may submit their names for consideration in the NBA annual draft at as long as they are at least 19 years of age during the calendar year in which the draft is held, and at least one NBA season has elapsed since the individual's graduation from high school. In addition to the NBA, there are numerous opportunities available to men's basketball student-athletes in international professional leagues. The subcommittee members discussed the difficulty in maintaining a level of academic engagement for these student-athletes once they have declared for the draft. The subcommittee members who coach these student-athletes indicated that there is a cultural expectation that they disengage academically once the basketball season has ended in order to prepare for the draft.
- e. **Nature of the NBA tryout process.** The annual NBA draft traditionally occurs in June. Student-athletes who have declared their desire to be drafted often participate in tryouts and the annual pre-draft camp (late May/early June) that occurs between the conclusion of the basketball season and the draft. Again the topic of academic disengagement was discussed, as well as the concern that those who may want to remain engaged cannot due to the tryout schedule. The group also discussed the common practice of agents or advisors to recommend prospective professional basketball players leave their institutions to prepare for the pre-draft camps at some other location.
- f. **Nature of the combine process for international leagues.** The tryout process for international leagues does not appear to be as organized as the NBA tryouts. There are professional league tryouts conducted in several countries from June through early September, but it is unclear how the schedule of those tryouts impacts a student-athlete's academic endeavors in his last term of enrollment prior to departing for the professional ranks. There is also a concern with this preparation that agents or advisors recommend that student-athletes leave their institutions to prepare for the tryouts.

The following are preliminary recommendations supported by the group related to the application of the Academic Progress Rate [APR] policies: [Note: Where applicable, the recommendations will be forwarded to the Committee on Academic Performance for consideration].

- a. **Provide greater flexibility in the waiver and adjustment processes during head coaching transitions.** The NCAA Division I Basketball Academic Enhancement Group supports some relief in contemporaneous penalties when a coaching transition occurs and to include the possibility to discount the retention (R) point when circumstances can be documented to reflect an individual student-athlete's decision to

- leave an institution due to a coaching change. Given the institutional responsibility to foster an environment that supports student-athlete academic achievement and retention, the group was reluctant to recommend steps that would alter the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) calculation in all instances of coaching transition.
- b. Revise the APR adjustment guidelines to be more flexible and to allow consideration of the student-athlete's level of academic engagement and achievement to the point of departure from the institution to pursue a professional athletics career, should that departure occur during his fourth year of collegiate enrollment.** Currently a student-athlete must have earned the eligibility (E) point in his last term of enrollment prior to departing the institution for the professional ranks in order for the institution to request an adjustment to the lost retention (R) point. Basically, the student-athlete has to be a "1/2" in order for the staff to consider granting an adjustment to the lost R point. However, in some instances (e.g., departures for foreign leagues) student-athletes must leave prior to the conclusion of the academic term in order to pursue professional opportunities. The subcommittee recommends providing relief specifically for a student-athlete in his fourth year of college enrollment. The staff will have to develop a means of assessing academic engagement and academic performance; however, consideration could be given to the student-athlete's APR point record for previous terms, his progress toward graduation and his level of academic engagement at the time of departure (e.g., class attendance, preliminary grades, completed assignments and faculty reports). This analysis could lead to APR adjustments (i.e., 1/1) in those cases in which student academic performance and engagement can be documented through class attendance records, preliminary grades, completed assignments and faculty reports.
- c. Revise the calculation of the APR to award an additional point as an incentive to motivate early graduation.** Currently, APR points are awarded on a term-by-term bases as follows: one point if the student-athlete is eligible for competition at the conclusion of the term (E), and one point if the student-athlete is retained the following term (R). At most, a student-athlete can accrue two points in one term, or "2/2." The subcommittee recommends the NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance modify this point calculation when a student-athlete completes a baccalaureate degree in less than four academic years. A similar accommodation could be provided for a student-athlete enrolled in a five-year baccalaureate degree program if he completes that program in less than five years. The subcommittee suggests when a student-athlete graduates ahead of schedule, the calculation include an additional point in the numerator. The early graduate would be considered a "3/2." Current policy stipulates that once a student-athlete graduates, the R point will continue to be awarded in all subsequent terms of enrollment. However,

- in order to earn the E point, the student-athlete must pass a minimal number of hours. Again, because of the nature of some professional opportunities, athletic and otherwise, some student-athletes do not complete terms after graduation or do not complete them satisfactorily. Should a graduated student-athlete fail to earn the E point in a term of enrollment after graduation, the additional point that was earned due to an early graduation would compensate for the lost point. If the student-athlete earns the E point after graduation, the additional point for early graduation would truly be a bonus for the student-athlete and the team.
- d. **Examine current professional tryout practices with the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the Federation of International Basketball Associations (FIBA).** The NCAA could work with the NBA and FIBA to determine whether other tryout options are available to encourage less missed class time among student-athletes still enrolled while exploring or pursuing professional opportunities.
 - e. **Adopt legislation granting "noncounter" status to a student-athlete who wishes to remain at the institution, but not participate in athletics, after the departure of the head coach who recruited him.** Such student-athletes could continue to receive athletics aid, but would not count against team scholarship limits as long as they do not return to athletics participation. If such a student-athlete was granted "noncounter" status, then elected to return to the men's basketball team in a subsequent term or season, he would become a counter for all years during which athletics aid was received. The subcommittee believes this legislative change would provide additional flexibility to student-athletes when their coaches leave, particularly for those who are in their final two to three semesters of a degree program who may not wish to transfer. The group does recognize, however, that many student-athletes are motivated to continue participating in basketball and still may choose to transfer for more playing time at a different institution, regardless of the scholarship opportunity at the original institution.
 - f. **Remove legislative barriers that may prevent a student-athlete from returning to an institution to complete a degree after a professional career.** Current legislation allows for five years of athletics aid to be provided within a six-year time period. Athletics aid awarded beyond those parameters must be "earned" aid. Flexibility in this area may encourage more former student-athletes to return to complete their degrees.
 - g. **Recommendation Related to Four-Year College Transfers** The group discussed Division I men's basketball student-athletes that transfer from a Division I institution and supported a recommendation that the Committee on Athletic Performance continue to examine and develop appropriate policies to allow for an adjustment of a retention point lost when a student-athlete transfers, provided: the student-athlete has a cumulative grade-point-average of 2.00 or higher and was academically eligible.

4. Other Recommendations.

Official Visits – Travel Expenses for Parents/Legal Guardians. The group recommends that the full group consider sponsoring legislation to allow institutions to provide travel expenses to the parents or legal guardians to accompany the prospective student-athlete on the prospect's official visit. Such a practice will ensure that coaches have greater opportunities to develop the player /coach relationship with the entire family, provide an avenue to emphasize the importance of education/academics and also provide greater insight into the family background that may assist coaches in making more sound decisions in the recruiting process.

Issues Still Under Consideration.

The following concepts will continue to be discussed by the full group [or one of its subcommittees], but no preliminary consensus position has been developed at this time.

1. Incoming Two-Year College Transfers.

- a. **Collect Research.** After reviewing research data supplied by the NCAA research staff, the group determined that there is insufficient data currently available to support any substantive increase to the academic requirements for two-year college transfers in the sport of men's basketball. The group believes that data should be collected that would help determine the characteristics of a successful two-year college transfer. In addition to academic based data, the group also believes that focus groups consisting of current and former two-year college transfers should be surveyed to determine what nonacademic based issues contribute to the academic success or failure of two-year college transfers in the sport of men's basketball.
- b. **Academic Access to Two-Year College Student-Athletes.** The group continues to explore the development of proposals that would provide academic support for two-year college transfers in the sport of men's basketball. This would require earlier access to the two-year college transfer student-athletes by academic support personnel at the four-year institution. In particular, the group is modeling current articulation agreements that various four-year institutions have with two-year institutions in part because of the demonstrated success that these agreements have in supporting the two-year college transfer at the two-year and four-year institutions.

2. Year of Academic Readiness.

a. Overview. For various reasons, some prospective student-athletes are underprepared academically to enter a four-year college or university and achieve academic success. Such prospective student-athletes have several options:

- (1) Attend a junior college in an effort to remedy academic deficiencies. This option begins a prospective student-athlete's progress-toward-degree requirements timeline (e.g., after two years the prospective student-athlete must have completed 40 percent of the requirements toward a bachelor's degree).
- (2) Attend a four-year college/university, and with significant academic support, attempt to make up academic deficiencies while taking a full college course load.
- (3) Attend a preparatory school in order to get better prepared academically for college.

While the reasons for lack of academic readiness vary, none of the options are ideal academically. Two-year transfers have the lowest graduation rates according to both federal and NCAA graduation rates data. While many preparatory schools are excellent, attendance at some does little to improve the academic readiness of a prospective student-athlete. Reports from the academic support community confirm that admitting prospective student-athletes who are academically significantly behind their general student body peers present some real challenges, even with the best academic support services in place. Additionally, some institutions are not able to devote significant financial resources to academic support activities.

The following is a new concept for consideration that provides academically underprepared prospective student-athletes another option involving NCAA member institutions. *A central question that may be important in the reform work is, "What mechanism exists or should exist for academically underprepared student-athletes to remediate deficiencies in order to eventually graduate from a four-year institution?"*

The concept outlined would permit prospective student-athletes to attend a member institution on athletics-related financial aid for a largely remedial academic year, without triggering the current progress-toward-degree requirements. The concept is further defined below.

b. Legislative Parameters.

- (1) Prospective student-athlete must use the year of academic readiness prior to any post high school college enrollment. The institution and the prospective student-athlete must declare in writing the year of academic readiness after final determination of the student's qualifier status, but not later than the last opportunity to enroll in the college's summer term. A student-athlete must be admitted to the institution, which could include a special admit or similar designation. A prospective student-athlete may only use the year of academic readiness in their first year of collegiate enrollment.
- (2) Year of academic readiness would be available to nonqualifiers.
- (3) Student-athlete may receive athletics-related aid. Student-athlete's financial aid would count against team limits consistent with any other student-athlete receiving aid.
- (4) Student-athlete may not compete.
- (5) Student-athlete may practice with the team at institutional/local facilities only.
- (6) Student-athlete may not travel with the team to any away competitions or other events (e.g., no summer foreign tours, no post-national championship trips to the White House).
- (7) Student-athlete's five-year athletics clock would start at the beginning of the year of academic readiness.
- (8) Student-athlete is not subject to percent degree, grade-point average and credit-hour requirements until after completion of the year of academic readiness (e.g., the terms do not count for purposes of determining grade-point average and percent-degree requirements). The student is subject to applicable institutional requirements (e.g., must be in good academic standing and meet university requirements).
- (9) Student-athlete who transfers during the year of academic readiness is subject to an academic year in residence.
- (10) Student-athlete is subject to the following academic requirements in order to be eligible for competition in their second year of collegiate enrollment.
 - Student-athlete must be enrolled full time per applicable legislation.

- Must complete 12 hours toward any degree program prior to the start of the student-athlete's second year of enrollment. Such hours do not have to be completed during the academic year (e.g., some or all may be earned during the summer).
- Must complete six semester or quarter hours per regular academic term and 18 semester or 27 quarter hours during the academic year. All such hours may be remedial.
- By the start of the student's third year of collegiate enrollment, the student must complete 36 degree-applicable semester hours (i.e., 12 from the first year, plus 24 required in year two) with a grade-point average of 90 percent of the institutional requirement (e.g., generally 2.000 is required thus a 1.800 would be needed).
- The student-athlete may not use any remedial hours to meet progress-toward-degree standards after completion of the year of academic readiness. Only remedial hours taken in the year of academic readiness may be used to meet academic eligibility requirements.

The following table summarizes the credit-hour requirements for these students using a semester school as the example:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Minimum hours required</u>
Summer after high school	6 hours
Fall semester (Year 1)	6*/9 hours
Spring semester (Year 1)	6*/9 hours
Summer after Year 1	6 hours
30 hours completed. 12 hours must be degree credit.	

*Must pass 6 hours per term and 18 hours during academic year.

c. NCAA Division I Committee on Academic Performance/NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate Impact.

- (1) A year in readiness student-athlete who meets the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) cohort definition (e.g., are on athletics aid) will be included in a teams' APR.
- (2) A year in readiness student-athlete earns a retention point in the same manner as all other student-athletes in the cohort.

- (3) A year in readiness student-athlete earns the eligibility point if they meet the progress-toward-degree requirements applicable to a student-athlete using an academic year of readiness referenced in this document.
- (4) The student-athlete would fail to earn the eligibility point if they do not graduate in six years, as opposed to the five years for student-athlete's not using this year of readiness.

d. General Observations.

- (1) Nonqualifiers are not permitted to receive athletics-related aid in their first year at a member institution. This legislation has been discussed throughout the years with some supporting aid to nonqualifiers. Aid to nonqualifiers certainly could be an alternative or addition to any discussion about the year of academic readiness. This concept however, does more than provide a means for aiding nonqualifiers, it also provides some relief from the immediate implementation of the progress-toward-degree standards while a prospective student-athlete more fully prepares academically for a traditional full college credit load.
- (2) Conferences with prohibitions against nonqualifiers may want to examine the implications of the year of academic readiness and whether such a concept would be permitted.
- (3) The two-year college community has expressed interest in delaying the onset of the "40-60-80" percent-degree requirements for two-year transfers. This request is predicated by the difficulty of improving academic deficiencies during a prospective student-athlete's two-year college enrollment and also ensuring the prospective student-athlete is prepared to meet the percent-degree requirements after four-year college enrollment.
- (4) This concept will not appeal to all academically underprepared prospective student-athletes. It will however, give those most interested in earning a college degree an option currently unavailable. At a minimum, it pulls to the forefront a prospective student-athlete's decision about education versus professional athletics ambitions.
- (5) Data demonstrates that prospective student-athletes who attend one four-year institution are most likely to graduate, as opposed to those who transfer. This concept may increase graduation rates among those minimally prepared for college.

- (6) Who will determine whether a prospective student-athlete makes use of the year of academic readiness? Those decisions would be made by member institutions in consultation with each prospective student-athlete, similar in some ways to decisions regarding redshirting.

- (7) Many in the college academic-support ranks have indicated a preference for having underprepared prospective student-athletes attend four year member institutions immediately after high school as opposed to transferring. This proposal permits a limited number of special admit prospective student-athletes to attend four-year institutions on

Note: It also should be noted that the group engaged in extensive discussion as to whether two year colleges are better equipped to assist in the remediation of academically underprepared men's basketball student-athletes and agreed there is some merit in considering the "Academic Year in Readiness" concept to be applied during the initial year of enrollment at a two-year college.

3. **Best Practices.** The group continues to develop a comprehensive list of best practices designed to assist institutions in implementing policies/practices to improve the academic performance of Division I men's basketball student-athletes. The list will include many practices /policies identified by the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletes [N4A]. [See Appendix A]