



# Communication Best Practices

A GUIDE FOR CHANCELLORS,  
PRESIDENTS AND COMMISSIONERS



## CONFERENCE ONBOARDING

**Commissioners** should schedule a meeting to onboard new chancellors and presidents, highlighting the following topics:

- Conference history.
- Philosophy and mission statement.
- Conference governance and reporting structures.
- Budget overview and presidential role.
  - Conference dues.
  - NCAA conference grant funding.
- Strategic plan.
- Meeting dates and expectations.
- Conference membership requirements.
- Roles of and interactions with **athletics department and key campus stakeholders**.
- Conference-sponsored sports and championships.
- NCAA, Division III and conference topics, including:
  - Academics.
  - Championships.
  - Compliance and bylaws.
  - Diversity and inclusion.
  - Health and safety.
  - Sportsmanship.

Data from a recent survey shows that, on average, Division III conference commissioners meet with their presidents twice in-person and once via teleconference on an annual basis.

In preparation for the onboarding meeting, **chancellors and presidents** may want to familiarize themselves with the following areas of their athletics program:

- Philosophy and mission statement.
- Budget.
- Strategic plan.
- Role of athletics in enrollment management.
- Roles and effectiveness of **athletics department and key campus stakeholders**.
- Recruiting strategies.
- Staffing.

And, also be familiar with key campus initiatives:

- Academics.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- Financial aid policies.
- Health, safety and overall student-athlete well-being.
- Performance expectations for student-athletes.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Correspondence regarding key campus, conference, Division III and NCAA topics should be sent from commissioners to chancellors and presidents on a regular basis. To ensure nothing of importance is missed, the following best practices may prove beneficial.

**Commissioners** should highlight issues of the utmost importance on a quarterly basis and provide direction on what to do with the information. This communication could include:

- Summarizing and emphasizing key information and action items.
- Discussing different types of NCAA communications chancellors and presidents can expect. For example:
  - NCAA updates:
    - Division III monthly newsletter.
    - Presidents Council quarterly update.
  - Reports:
    - Annual Division III report.
    - Committee meetings reports.
    - Meeting summaries.
  - Event information:
    - NCAA Convention.
    - National and conference events.
  - Division III manual.
  - Guides and best practices.
- Regularly communicate with and engage **athletics department and key campus stakeholders**.

**Chancellors and presidents** are encouraged to share information, resources and best practices learned in NCAA committee meetings or working groups with peer chancellors and presidents from their conference.

### Key campus stakeholders to consider in all conversations include:

- Athletics direct report.
- Directors of athletics.
- Faculty athletics representatives.
- Senior woman administrators.
- Coaches.
- Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.
- Athletic trainers.
- Directors of athletics communications.

## CONFERENCE INVOLVEMENT

To evaluate communications and foster engagement, the **commissioner and chancellors and presidents** should frequently discuss the following:

- Conference budget.
- NCAA conference grant funding requirements and expectations.
- Strategic plan.
- Governance and reporting structures.
- Roles and expectations for **athletics department and key campus stakeholders**.
- NCAA, Division III and conference issues, including:
  - Academics.
  - Championships.
  - Compliance and bylaws.
  - Diversity and inclusion.
  - Health and safety.
  - Sponsored sports.
  - Sportsmanship.

At least 30 Division III chancellors and presidents serve on committees at the national level annually.

In addition to engaging with the commissioner on a regular basis, **chancellors and presidents** should also:

- Discuss key athletics topics with their athletics direct report, director of athletics and faculty athletics representative.
- Be an active voice in conference substructures.

## NCAA INVOLVEMENT

The NCAA national office administers rules; organizes national championships; provides educational services; manages financial systems for the membership; gives direction on health and safety; and conducts research into the experiences of those involved in college sports.

Serving on national committees is an important role for **chancellors and presidents** in representing both their school and conference.

Every Division III conference has a representative on either the NCAA Presidents Council, Management Council, or the Presidents Advisory Group.

**Commissioners** should make chancellors and presidents aware of committee openings and encourage involvement on the following NCAA legislative governance committees:

- Association-wide.
  - Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA).
  - Honors Committee.
  - Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (MOIC).
- Division III.
  - Presidents Council.
  - Presidents Advisory Group.
  - Management Council.
  - Financial Aid Committee.
  - Infractions Appeals Committee.
  - Membership Committee.
  - Nominating Committee.
  - Strategic Planning and Finance Committee.

Other nonlegislative opportunities available for **chancellors and presidents** include topical working groups.

Because Division III operates under a "one institution, one vote" legislative model, all **chancellors and presidents** are encouraged to attend the annual NCAA Convention, where legislation is discussed and voted on.





The Division III philosophy states an expectation that “institutional presidents and chancellors have the ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the intercollegiate athletics program at the institutional, conference and national governance levels.”

**Directed at conference commissioners and chancellors/presidents, this guide aims to:**

- Enhance communication between those two groups.
- Encourage informed decision-making at the national, conference and institutional levels of Division III.
- Define the role each group plays within their conference and the NCAA governance structure.

**Through our united commitment to academics, fairness and well-being, we can create a pathway that leads to a lifetime of opportunity for student-athletes.**

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