

NCAA & CAMPUS PARTNERSHIP
Integration – Education & Athletics, a Model for Success
Final Report

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. Why the Topic of Integration?

During the past five years there has been much discussion in the NCAA Division III regarding the conduct of our athletics programs. Beyond the many discussions of championships, playing and practice seasons and a few other “operations” topics, there is one theme that seems to evoke more questions than answers: integration. What do we mean by it and how is it achieved? The initiatives of the Division III Strategic Plan, the Joint Subcommittee on the Future of Division III, the College Sports Project and the recent Division III Best Practices would point to the fact that this important topic has emerged and that it deserves our attention.

2. History of Topic.

a. Integration as a fundamental principle of Division III.

Integration is not a new concept. It is embedded in the Division III philosophy statement. Refer to page 216 of the Division III Manual. The statement provides clear direction for our intercollegiate athletics programs. At the 2006 NCAA Convention, the membership strengthened the principle of integration by adopting three additional principles:

- (g) Assure that athletics programs support the institution’s educational mission by financing, staffing and controlling the programs through the same general procedures as other departments of the institution. Further, the administration of an institution’s athletics program (e.g., hiring, compensation, professional development, certification of coaches) should be integrated into the campus culture and educational mission;
- (i) Assure that academic performance of student-athletes is, at a minimum, consistent with that of the general student body; and
- (j) Assure that admission policies for student-athletes comply with policies and procedures applicable to the general student body;

There should be little question as to why this topic is important: integration is the fundamental principle of Division III and should be embraced by all of us. Our challenge as college and athletics administrators is take the words from page 216 and put them into action on each of our campuses. It is my hope that this project will assist schools in striving for and achieving an integrated intercollegiate-athletics program.

b. College Sports Project.

In response to concerns voiced by a number of Division III presidents about a widening “academic-athletics divide,” the Mellon Foundation created the College Sports Project (CSP): Two fundamental and interconnected objectives serve as the cornerstones of the CSP: First, athletes are primarily students and second, students who participate in intercollegiate athletics should do so in an environment that is integrated with and complementary to the educational values of the institution. The Mellon Foundation made a grant that created a center for data collection and analysis at Northwestern University. The center is currently in the process of assisting approximately 120 Division III institutions in measuring several dimensions of their athletes’ “representativeness” (including grade-point average, class rank, field of study, graduation rate, SAT/ACT score). Eugene Tobin, *The Integration of Academic and Athletic Values: Where Do We Go From Here?*

In addition, the CSP offers an integration institute to individual schools and conferences. The CSP continues to serve as an important resource.

c. NCAA Best Practices.

In 2006, the NCAA began seeking campus or conference best practices to benefit the membership in the following three areas:

- (1) Academic success of student-athletes (academic-progress models);
- (2) Cultural and campus integration (mentor, education, hiring, sportsmanship programs for student-athletes and staff); and
- (3) Sport and program equity (travel, facilities, equipment, personnel, squad size, game management policies and promotional, fund-raising, all-sport award models).

3. Methodology.

The project began in May with attendance at the NADIIIAA Summer Forum and the NACDA Convention. Prior to making my presentation on integration, I asked the convention participants to write down their definition of integration. I asked the same

question of those attending the NACWAA Convention, the FARA Fall Forum and the NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Leadership Conference.

Part II of the project was to make campus visits. The eight schools selected reflect the diversity of Division III: public, national liberal arts, independent and small college. The schools visited were: Nebraska Wesleyan, SUNY-Oswego, Allegheny, Southwestern, Wisconsin-Whitewater, Kenyon, Beloit and Franklin & Marshall.

During the campus visits I met with four groups: coaches, student-athletes, athletic administrators and the person to whom athletics reports. Each group was asked to select a definition that best fit their understanding of integration and then respond to three questions; 1) What does integration look like on your campus?; 2) What are the challenges and/or risks?; and 3) What is one best practice or one thing that you would do, that you are not doing now?

RESULTS

1. Each group was presented with the following four definitions of integration and asked to choose the one that best fit their understanding of integration.

- The following definition is taken from *Integration and Communication*, Bob Malekoff, College Sports Project.
 - A deliberate effort to encourage the academic, athletic and student life dimensions of colleges and universities to work jointly in attempting to align athletic programs with educational missions.
- The definitions below emerged from the responses of the groups listed in the methodology.
 - Merging intercollegiate athletics into the life of the institution by collaborating with the various campus departments to ensure a well-rounded experience for student-athletes.
 - Student-athletes, coaches and athletics administrators involved in the life of the campus such that athletics is seen as a part of the campus culture and an essential part of the college or university mission.
 - Having an athletics representative at the table for all institutional decisions in order to successfully blend the academic, administrative and student life components of the institution.
- The majority of coaches, student-athletes, administrators and NACWAA participants selected the following definition:

- Student-athletes, coaches and athletics administrators engaged in the life of the campus such that athletics is seen as a part of the campus culture and an essential part of the college or university mission.
- The faculty athletic representatives selected the following definition:
 - A deliberate effort to encourage the academic, athletic and student life dimensions of college and universities to work jointly in attempting to align athletic programs with educational missions.

2. What does integration look like on your campus?

- **Coaches** tended to view integration largely in terms of a process or function. Most of them did not possess a philosophical base and saw it as a transaction or individual relationship with a department, faculty member or staff person. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix A)*
- **Student-athletes** tended to view integration as participation in activities outside of athletics, maintaining academics as a first priority and having visible support for their teams. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix A)*
- **Athletics Administrators** tended to view integration as a collaborative effort with academic units on campus; they viewed themselves as facilitators for integration, and viewed integration from the perspective of their reporting structure (e.g., student affairs, academic, president). *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix A)*
- **College/university administrators** tended to view integration as an expectation of the athletics director, along with an expectation that student-athletes are held to the same standards as all students. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix A)*

3. What are the challenges and or risks?

- Issues of time as it relates to the demands of recruiting; additional duties; a feeling that the athletics department is expected to do the “leg work” and that faculty do not understand the role of athletics, were the issues most often identified by **coaches**. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix B)*
- **Student-athletes** tended to identify the challenges largely as a lack of time and energy due to the demands of academics and year-round training, a lack of publicity for contests, a lack of fan support and an inconsistency in, or lack of, policies regarding missed classes. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix B)*
- **Athletic administrators** tended to identify two major challenges. The first involved helping coaches to understand and support the practice of integration. Secondly, they

often described situations where the role of athletics was not always understood by faculty and administrators. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix B)*

- **College/university administrators** tended to identify the challenges largely as an issue of coaches having a narrow view or as lacking an institutional perspective (i.e. “seeing the bigger picture”). They also expressed concern over the amount of time required for games, travel, practice and post season. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix B)*
- **Faculty athletic representatives** tended to identify the challenges as issues of coaches not being viewed as legitimate members of the faculty, the lack of a consistent policy for missed class and a need to better articulate the contribution of athletics to the educational mission of the institution. *(For a complete list of responses see Appendix B)*

4. One Best Practice OR one thing that you would do that you are not doing now.

Several categories emerged in response to this question: Academic, community service, publicity, administrative and miscellaneous. The programs, along with a brief description, are listed under each category.

Examples of Best Practices directly related to Academics:

- Faculty/mentor coach program where a faculty member participates in designated team functions.
- “Call a faculty member” – once a week a coach calls a different faculty member to go for coffee or lunch.
- Assign, from athletics, a liaison to each academic department.
- Host a faculty forum on intercollegiate athletics.
- Recognize National Student-Athlete Day – student-athlete dinner or luncheon.
- Annual academic awards program – invite faculty and parents.
- Consistent with other departments, develop a set of learning outcomes for student-athletics.

Examples of Best Practices directly related to Community Service:

- Red Ribbon Day – form a partnership with an elementary school where student-athletes are involved in reading programs, play days and mentoring.
- Campus cleanup – a partnership with the physical plant to assist with cleanup and set up for graduation.
- Assist with freshman move-in day – football team.
- National Association of Girls and Women in Sports (NAGWS) Day – sponsor clinic.
- Develop a student-athlete handbook.

Examples of Best Practice directly related to Publicity:

- Create a communication board centrally located on campus.
- Have a student-athlete t-shirt day.

Examples of Best Practice directly related to College Administration:

- Athletics director as member of the senior staff.
- Athletics director makes annual report to the faculty (can partner with faculty athletic representative).
- Develop an athletics department handbook.
- Attend divisional meetings of student life.
- Develop an annual report that is shared with faculty, trustees, alumni and college administrators that include data on academics, graduations, majors, etc.
- Student life offers joint programs (e.g., hazing, alcohol education).
- Assign coaches to meaningful campus committees.
- Collaborate with the admission office to conduct an annual recruiting seminar.

Miscellaneous:

- Attend more non-athletic events – greater visibility on campus.
- Team night out – attend a non-athletic event as a team.
- Develop a stronger intramural program.
- Collaborate with the development office on a fund-raising program (too much nickel and dime stuff).
- Develop a viable recreation program.

WHAT WAS LEARNED?

In this section I will share with you what I learned from listening to approximately 70 coaches, over 250 student-athletes, 30 athletics administrators, 7 college administrators and 40 faculty. The responses were often consistent with my own experience working in intercollegiate athletics for the past 30 years.

The traditional model of Teacher/Coach is gone. There was a time in our history when athletics was more fully integrated into the physical education department. This model provided a direct link to an academic unit on most campuses. Coaches typically taught in an academic curriculum and also coached. Over time the model has changed, due in part to greater expectations for winning and increased demands on coaches' time, most notably in the area of recruiting. Coaches today are less likely to have formal preparation as teachers and are more likely technicians and tacticians in their respective sports. The link to academics is less pronounced and in some cases does not exist. This scenario is one of the most significant issues for an integration model.

The recruitment of prospective student-athletes is critical to attaining institutional enrollment goals. The role of athletics recruiting is vital to an institution. Most of our schools are tuition driven and rely on meeting their enrollment and retention goals to achieve institutional budget requirements. It is not unusual for a school to have 30-40% of their student-athletes participating in varsity athletics and 40-60% of their first-year student-athletes indicating an interest in varsity sports. Without athletics recruitment many schools would not achieve their enrollment goals; thus, putting greater demands on coaching staffs.

The AQ system whets our appetite for attaining championships. The AQ system has provided more institutions with the opportunity for their teams to qualify for a NCAA post-season berth. As more institutions experience the post season, it is natural to want more of a good thing. The quest for championships lends itself to a “keeping up with the Joneses” mentality and can divert attention away from the connection to the educational mission of the college.

TIME and the lack of it was a consistent message from coaches, student-athletes and athletics administrators. More time is required of the student-athlete for year-round training. More time is required of coaches to recruit and have additional duties, and more time is required for athletics administrators to have oversight of operations, fund-raising, special events, planning and facility and personnel management.

There is a narrow view of integration. Integration is done in segments (e.g., awards banquet, a team has a mentor coach, faculty appreciation day). The definitions that were identified reflected an institutional view of integration, but the reality is that most coaches and student-athletes, as well as some administrators, see integration as programmatic. There is a disconnect between the definition of integration and its application.

Integration must be intentional. First, we must think about integration and then be willing to act on it in the same way we do other issues and challenges of the institution.

The role of the president and senior administration is the critical component to achieving integration. Integration must be institutionalized. The president and senior administrators are needed to set the expectation that intercollegiate athletics will be an integral component of the institution and will operate under the same parameters and umbrella as all other units on campus. Senior administration sets the tone through their words, actions and decision making. Strong leadership can create a campus environment where integration is a two-way street and all constituencies contribute to a common goal; the institutional mission.

In addition to what was learned above, there were several interesting responses:

- SAAC was never mentioned by any of the groups when responding to “what does integration look like” or to best practices.
- One reason given by coaches and student-athletes as to why athletics is integrated on their campus was not having a football program. There was a perception that having football meant that other programs would be overshadowed by the larger number of participants; football takes over resources and takes a higher profile than other sports.
- Having a stronger recreation and intramural program would improve integration.

➤ **How do we get there?**

- First, think boldly, make tough decisions and enlist strong leadership.
- Start the conversations.
 - √ Integration should serve as the umbrella.
 - √ You must have a philosophical foundation from which to work.
- Create a checklist.
 - √ Integration becomes a part of the way in which we think and how we go about daily business.
- Integration must begin at the grass-roots level.
 - √ Make it your responsibility.
 - √ Have conversation in your department, on your campus – repetition is good.
 - √ Don’t make excuses – not enough time, frustration, inertia – do you have the WILL to ACT?
 - √ Set expectations for coaches – job descriptions, evaluations, hiring process.
 - √ Model the behavior and inspire others – our words, actions and decisions do make a difference. Building positive relationships must be at the core of our philosophy.
- Transparency – define what is success for your program, measure it and share the news.
- Develop strategies, think creatively.
 - √ Tired of the word “integration”? How about: collaborate, partner, links, build relationships....others?
 - √ Challenge your athletics department management team to develop ideas and strategies.

- √ Challenge your student-athletes, SAAC.
- √ Create a professional development program for coaches, faculty and administration.
- Resources.
 - √ College Sports Project – www.collegesportsproject.org.
 - √ Division III Commissioners Association – www.diiicomm.org.
 - √ NCAA – www.ncaa.org, link to Division III to Best Practices , ISSG and Program Assessment.
 - √ Us – the membership – NADIII AA listserve. NADIII AATalk@uaa.rochester.edu.

Based on what was learned, I offer four recommendations. All four are important as schools strive for integration. They are listed in priority order.

1. Have each athletics director report directly to the president and/or serve on the president's cabinet. It is important that the athletics director serve as a senior administrator. This structure ensures that athletics is represented in the communication structure of the institution and involved in the decision making process.
2. Adopt legislation to further control recruiting (e.g., recruiting calendars and contact limitations). Implementing additional controls on recruiting addresses the issue of increased time demands on coaches. Currently coaches are on 12-month cycles with no limitations on attendance at contests and phone and mail contacts. The competition for quality student-athletes is fierce and the unintended consequence is a Division III arms race. In addition, more limitations may help in controlling athletics department costs.
3. Eliminate the nontraditional segment for all sports. Student-athletes spoke to the challenge of having limited time due to year-round training. This recommendation would allow for a student-athlete to truly be out of season. It would also allow coaches to be out of season and provide for additional opportunities to be involved in the life of the campus.
4. De-emphasize national championships and focus on conference and regional competition. The quest for national championships has taken on a more prominent place in Division III. There is the influence of the AQ system and a sports culture that emphasizes crowning a “champion”, even at the lowest levels of youth sport. This affects not only the expectations of coaches but prospective student-athletes and their parents. Placing the focus on achieving conference and regional championships is more realistic for the majority of Division III teams. It eases the issue of continuing to add resources (facilities, recruiting, staffing) in order to “keep up with the Joneses”, and may possibly focus more attention on integrating the educational and athletics goals of the institution.

NEXT STEPS

- Project report available on the NCAA Web site – March 2007.
- Develop an education program that can be linked to a year long calendar that designates steps for integration (e.g. August-orientation, September – faculty forum, October-community service project) and would include a guide for Best Practices.-September 1, 2007.

APPENDIX A

Responses to “what does integration looks like on your campus?”

Coaches commented on the following:

- Working with the admissions office on the recruitment of student-athletes.
- Appointed to a college/university committee.
- Working with academic support services.
- Some level of teaching responsibilities.
- Recruiting:
 - Recruiting days coordinated with the admissions office – includes deans and faculty.
 - There is an admissions office liaison to athletics.
 - We have admission quotas.
- Presidents and vice presidents in attendance at ceremonies and contests.
- It starts at the top with the president and trickles down.
- Registrar’s office – confirming eligibility.
- The role of the athletics director:
 - Visible on campus with the faculty.
 - Sets expectations for coaches.
 - Works with advisers to educate about the student-athlete experience.
 - Strong reputation on campus.
- Academic:
 - Coaches attend faculty meetings and vote.
 - A department form for notification of missed class.
 - Coaches teach in general education program.
 - Students miss practice for academic obligations.
 - A coach is assigned to work with the advising center.
 - NSAD – recognize academic achievement.
 - We talk to our athletes about academics, community involvement – “we market the _____ message.
- Physical plant is willing to help us.
- It is an individual effort – up to each coach.
- Community outreach – volunteer activities from team/SAAC.
- “There is none”.
- Coaches share student-athletes – dual sports are encouraged.
- Fall student-athletes participate in freshman orientation.
- Multiple tasks for coaches (e.g. game administration, facility management, recreation).

Students commented on the following:

- Student-athletes are involved in the fine arts, study abroad and student government.
- My coach stresses academics and we miss practice to go to class.
- We participate in a community service project.
- Most of the time the faculty are supportive.

- We need more students and people at our games.
- Some of my teammates studied abroad and are involved in choir and theatre.
- Our coaches:
 - Talk to us about academics – clear that academics is #1 priority.
 - Use academic progress reports.
 - Conduct study halls.
 - Use the liaison to the academic resource center.
 - Support participating in dual sports.
 - Excuse us from practice for academic obligations.
 - Work with the admissions office.
- We participate in freshman orientation.
- Faculty mentor program.
- No football program.
- All of our teams participate in Make a Difference Day.
- Faculty:
 - Support us when we miss class.
 - Attend our games.
 - Ask us about our games.
- Academic credit for participating in a sport.
- Early registration for upper-class athletes.
- The president and or vice president attend our games.
- We are held to the same standard as other students.

Athletics Administrators had this to say:

- The athletics director must represent the department across the campus – visibility.
- Build relationships with the faculty – develop faculty/coach programs.
- The importance of support from the president and senior staff.
- Role of athletics director:
 - Represent the department across campus – build relationships.
 - Serves on Academic Affairs Committee.
 - Is involved in most major institutional initiatives.
 - Serves as a faculty marshall.
 - Presents to the faculty on facts and figures of departments.
 - Has a voice on trustee, student life committee.
 - MUST be visible at events and contest.
 - Serves on president's senior staff.
 - Participates in the new faculty/staff orientation.
 - Deals with big picture issues.
- Registrar's office – eligibility.
- Full-time coaches.
- Sharing of facilities.
- Champs Life Skills program.
- Institutional policy for missed class time.
- Athletics is a part of the institution's strategic plan.
- Coaches have faculty status.

- Faculty/coach program.
- Presidential vision and leadership is critical.

College/University Administrators had this to say:

- Our student-athletes have a strong presence on campus.
- The role of the athletics director is critical – must have credibility and visibility on campus.
- I don't get complaints from the faculty.
- Actively involved in other areas.
- Athletics is healthy – I can't think of anything else that can inspire all of us – is a rallying point for our campus!
- Must have the right people around the table – can't imagine not having the athletics director on the senior staff.
- Strong presidential leadership at the conference level.
- The role of the athletics director is critical.
- President's Excellence Fund.
- Coaches are:
 - Members of the faculty.
 - Have important relationships with students – 24/7.
 - Serve on committees.
 - Clearly understand our mission – academics is the #1 priority.
- Long history of Academic All Americans.
- Faculty is in attendance at games and ceremonies.
- I don't get any complaints from faculty.
- Lack of a football program.

APPENDIX B

Responses to “what are the challenges and/or risks?”

Coaches commented:

- Integration is one sided – athletics is expected to do all the leg work.
- Not sure that faculty, and in some cases the administration, see the value of athletics.
- Time – expected to do more.
- Lack of internal (department) integration.
- Not sure that the faculty see the value of athletics as part of the student’s education.
- Coach motivation.
- How does it serve my needs?
- Issue of time along with other duties.
- “The institution gets what it contracts me for, not in my job description”.
- Jealousy factor.
- Facilities.
- Resources.
- Ability to influence the student.
- Narrow view of coaches – one minded.
- A one-sided issue – we don’t see the faculty/administration making the same effort.
- Athletics is expected to do the leg work.
- Vocal minority of faculty that are opposed to athletics.
- No role in the development operation but expected to raise money.
- Complacency (result of doing a good job) – lack of forward movement.
- Lack of department integration – territorial, no understanding of what other coaches are doing.
- Part-time coaches.
- Facility location – physically marginalized.
- High-profile program “takes over” and only one program becomes the face of athletics.
- We are viewed as a necessary evil.
- Feeling forced into this.
- No academic major – loss of faculty status.
- TIME – recruiting.
- Stereotyping of teams and student-athletes – “dumb jocks”.
- Student-athlete is stretched too thin – over-functioning expectations for student-athletes – being a good student and athlete is no longer enough.

Students commented:

- Lack of time and energy.
- Not enough publicity.
- Faculty response to missed class.
- Required to fund-raise.
- Community service.
- In season all year – that is what is required to be good.

- After class and academics, not much time left over.
- Lack of publicity and student support at our games.
- Lack of awareness and understanding by faculty of what we do and why we participate.
- Sometimes it feels like us vs. them (faculty).
- Poor facilities.
- Most athletes focus on their team.
- Inconsistency with missed class policy.
- We have no programs with faculty.
- Coaches are not integrated.
- Part-time coaches.

Athletic Administrators commented:

- Coaches “buy in”.
- The value of the athletics experience is not always understood.
- Benefits are great, but it requires time, harder work and greater accountability.
- TIME –doing more:
 - Recruit.
 - Fund-raise.
 - Monitor academic performance.
 - Teach.
- Organizational chart – not always at the table for discussion and decision making.
- Student-athletes are more integrated than coaches.
- Getting “buy in” from coaches, particularly veterans.
- Going away from the old model of teacher/coach.
- Part-time staff.
- There is too much focus on our differences – find common ground.
- The value of integration is not seen the same by the other side (faculty, administration).
- Physical separation of facilities.
- Lack of recognition of what athletics can do to further the goals of the institution.
- Underlying animosity by some faculty.
- No institutional policy for missed class.
- Higher expectations and increased level of success.
- Be careful what you ask for – responsibility to share and be transparent.
- Benefits are great, you are included in all areas, it is harder, more work, greater accountability.

College/University Administrators commented:

- Narrow view of coaches can create silos and an us vs. them attitude.
- Time required for games, travel, practice and post season.
- Game schedules.
- Travel schedule (flight conference).
- Practice.
- Post-season schedule.
- Teaching and coaching – can both be accomplished successfully?

Faculty Athletic Representatives commented:

- Coaches are not viewed as legitimate members of the faculty.
- Time away from class – inconsistency in missed class policy.
- Lack of education on the value of athletics and its contribution to the institution’s mission.
- Receiving support from history at the institution – lack of trust.
- TIME.
- The administration for faculty/coach programs.
- Reward system – what is the incentive?
- Unrealistic attitude of incoming student-athletes.
- A lack of collaborative decision making.
- Student-athlete’s lack of confidence in communicating with faculty.
- EDUCATION – need to articulate how athletics contributes to the institutional mission.
- Consistency in missed class policy.