

Bison Bulletin



Bucknell University Athletics Compliance Department

National Letter of Intent Insight - Bylaw 13.02.12

As we near the Spring 2018 NLI signing period, it is important to remind coaches, athletic administration, and supporting staff to be mindful of the policies surrounding the NLI process. Per Bylaw 13.02.12, and NLI is described as the official document administered by the Collegiate Commissioners Association and used by subscribing member institutions to establish the commitment of a prospective student-athlete to attend a particular institution. Once signed, this document binds the prospective student-athlete full-time to the institution for one year and commits the institution to provide athletics financial aid for one academic year.

A few of the general policies surrounding a prospective student-athlete signing an NLI include that coaches are not permitted to be present when a prospect signs an NLI at an off-campus location, a prospect must sign an NLI within seven days of issuance, prospects may sign an NLI no earlier than 7:00am (prospects local time) on the initial signing date and if a prospect is younger than 21, a parent or legal guardian must also sign the NLI.

In terms of post-NLI signing, most of the pre-NLI signing rules still apply however, there are a few changes once this process occurs. After a valid NLI is signed, coaches may comment regarding a prospect including comments regarding the prospect athletic ability and potential contribution to the program, coaches may

make unlimited phone calls, text messages and communicate publicly on social media with the prospect, prospects may take an official or unofficial visit to the institution's campus during a dead period, institutions may pay to have a prospects transcripts or ACT/SAT scores sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center and institutions may produce personalized audio/video presentations to show a that individual prospect.



In the News...

In March, the Committee on Infractions found that an institution failed to monitor the housing for three men's tennis student-athletes who had been receiving reduced-cost housing from a booster. The Division I Committee concluded that the head men's tennis coach did not promote an atmosphere of compliance in his program. This coach was aware the student-athletes rented rooms as well as drove the booster's cars and failed to question and report this arrangement to the compliance staff.

Based on these infractions, the NCAA panel determined the following measures to be placed upon the team

- Two years of probation and a \$5,000 fine
- A four-year disassociation of the booster and a permanent ban on student-athletes renting housing or cars from the booster
- A vacation of records in which men's tennis student-athletes competed while eligible
- A reduction of men's tennis scholarship equivalencies by 5% for the 2017-18 academic year
- Completion of a comprehensive compliance review by an outside agency with athletics compliance expertise within the next six months

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DI Committee on Academics considers transfer rule changes

Members favor academic benchmark for immediate competition after transfer

By: Michelle Brutlag Hosick

April 5, 2018

The Division I Committee on Academics will recommend to the Transfer Working Group that four-year transfer student-athletes who meet specific grade-point average and progress-toward-degree requirements be able to compete immediately at the second school.

The academic data reviewed by the committee indicated that, on average, sitting out a year of competition following a transfer may not be academically necessary for student-athletes with a strong scholastic foundation. As a result, the committee will recommend benchmarks that align with successful academic progress after transfer.

Committee members agreed those benchmarks should include a GPA between 3.0 and 3.3 and a requirement that students be academically eligible for competition at the time of transfer, based on their progress toward earning a degree within five years of initial enrollment.

The group considered adjusting those requirements to put transfer students who want to compete immediately on a track to graduate in four years. But it ultimately opted to keep the rule the same for transfers and non-transfers. Current academic progress rules keep students on a track to graduate in five years.

Data shows that, regardless of their sport, transfers with GPAs below 3.0 are most at risk for taking longer to graduate — or not graduating at all.

Nicole Sherwin, a committee member who represents the national Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, reminded the committee that just because a student-athlete will be eligible to transfer and play immediately doesn't mean he or she will do so.

"The process of transferring is tough, and this isn't indicative of how many will transfer," said Sherwin, who competed in soccer at Northern Arizona while earning degrees in biomedical science and psychology. "Doesn't mean all these students will leave schools. It's just how many could. Give those students the opportunity."

Members also considered setting different academic standards depending on whether the student was transferring after their freshman, sophomore, junior or senior year. The conversation was confined to undergraduate transfers. Ultimately, the group agreed on a single GPA benchmark for all student-athletes that predicts a high likelihood of graduation after transfer.

Committee members also considered endorsing a potential rule that would require all student-athletes to sit out a year of competition after transferring. But it agreed that data does not support requiring academically high-achieving student-athletes to sit out.

"This issue is very complex, and we want to give input to the working group that is both meaningful and useful," said committee chair John J. DeGioia, president of Georgetown. "We recognize the working group will examine this in a more detailed and nuanced way. From our perspective, an academic benchmark should be set at a level that will help support the student's path to graduation."

Members favored a phased effective date in which both the current one-time transfer exception and an academic-based transfer exception exist in the rulebook at the same time. In that scenario, the academic exception would become effective for the 2019-20 academic year; the current rule would then be eliminated after the 2020-21 academic year. That approach would make the academic-based transfer exception available to all student-athletes while gradually phasing out the current one-time transfer exception, which many student-athletes currently use.

The committee valued that approach because it provides notice both to student-athletes who can currently utilize the one-time transfer exception that it will be eliminated, and to coaches that the rules are changing. It also would give academically successful student-athletes in sports that don't have a one-time transfer exception the opportunity to transfer and compete immediately as early as 2019. The committee's recommendation will go to the Transfer Working Group for consideration.

The committee also began conversations about potential changes to the Academic Progress Rate. The discussed change would hold schools that accept transfer students accountable for their academic success without changing the rate so much that the current benchmarks lose their meaning. Those conversations will continue at future meetings and will be informed by data.

Accelerating Academic Success Program

The committee examined outcomes from the first two classes of the Accelerating Academic Success Program, a tiered-grant program intended to provide funding for academic initiatives at limited-resource schools. The program also includes a student-athlete career development award and an annual conference for all schools eligible to apply for funding.

In aggregate, the program has been successful, with APRs increasing at most schools that received funding.

Qualitative data also showed increased success referred to as the "AASP ripple effect." Student-athletes exposed to summer school and leadership training for the first time because of the grants reported higher levels of self-confidence. The cross-campus collaboration required for many of the grant initiatives contributed to a more positive campus culture. Coaches found recruiting easier because parents could see the academic resources that were devoted to student-athletes.

The national office staff tasked with overseeing the AASP program will continue to review the grant recipients' initiatives and report back periodically to the Committee on Academics.

Academic Misconduct

The group also reviewed the recently changed academic misconduct rules and discussed how different scenarios on campus may be decided when applying the new rules. The group will continue with similar exercises to identify potential areas where the current rules could be fine-tuned or clarified.

Social Media Rules Education - Use Your Thumbs Wisely



Permissible Actions:

- Friend/Follow/Connect a Social Media Profile
- Reposting (Sharing, Re-tweeting, etc.) a Social Media Post
 - * Except on Recruiting or Scouting Services accounts
- Actions of Approval (Liking, Favorite, etc.) Social Media Post
 - * Except on Recruiting or Scouting Services accounts
- Private Message Functions (Direct Messaging)

Impermissible Actions:

- Associating (Tagging or Mentioning) a Profile to a Social Media Post
- Commenting on a Social Media Post (including attached to a repost)
- Posting, commenting on or associating content unrelated to athletics or recruitment (e.g. Happy Birthday)
 - * Except on coaches, teams, schools or facilities of PSA's



Compliance Conundrum

Q: The Video Director at Ocean State University (OSU) has been busy putting together video highlights of all the recruits that are going to sign a National Letter of Intent (NLI) with OSU in the sport of football. Once the recruits have signed their NLIs, can the Video Director create a personalized version of these video highlights for the coaches to play for them?

A: Yes

NCAA Staff Interpretation- 2/27/15- Personalized Audio/Video Presentations After Prospective Student-Athlete's Commitment (I) - states that an institution may produce and arrange personalized audio/video presentations to show to or play for a prospective student-athlete after he or she has signed a National Letter of Intent or the institution's written offer of admission and/or financial aid or after the institution has received his or her financial deposit in response to its offer of admission.

By Jennifer M. Condaras

Deputy Commissioner, NCAA Relations & Administration, Colonial Athletic Association

March 27, 2018.

Upcoming Spring Games:

Baseball

4/14-15 @ Holy Cross

4/18 @ Navy

Softball

4/14 vs Lehigh

4/21-22 @ Colgate

Men's Tennis

4/14 @ Navy

4/15 @ Loyola MD

Women's Tennis

4/11 vs Lehigh

4/13 @ Mount St. Mary's

4/14 vs Loyola MD

Women's Lacrosse

4/14 @ Boston U.

4/18 vs Loyola MD

Men's Lacrosse

4/13 vs Lafayette

4/20 vs Lehigh

Men's Golf

4/14 @ Yale Spring Inv.

4/16 @ Finegan Inv.

Women's Golf

4/21-22 @ PL Championship

Men's & Women's Track & Field

4/21 - Bucknell Team Challenge

4/26-28 @ Penn Relays

4/28 - Maroon & Gold Invitational

Rowing

4/15 vs Lehigh

4/21 - Cherry Hill Invitational

Women's Water Polo

4/14 @ Harvard/Brown

4/15 @ GW/Princeton

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Bucknell University, by virtue of its membership with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), is responsible for ensuring complete compliance of all constituencies with all NCAA Rules and Regulations.

This newsletter serves as a way for the Compliance Department to educate and inform our coaches, sports administrators, and student-athletes about relevant rules and tips, hot topics in college athletics, and upcoming dates to remember.

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Dead Period Reminders

Monday, April 9 - Thursday, April 12

Men's Basketball

Women's Basketball

Baseball

Cross Country and Track & Field

Men's Lacrosse

Women's Lacrosse

Volleyball

Field Hockey

Softball

Men's Golf

Women's Golf

Women's Rowing

Swimming and Diving

Men's Tennis

Women's Tennis

Women's Water Polo

Wrestling

Thursday, May 17 - Friday, May 25

Men's Basketball

Wednesday, June 6 - Saturday, June 9

Cross Country and Track & Field

Friday, May 25 (noon) - Tuesday, May 29 (noon)

Men's Lacrosse

Friday, May 25 - Sunday, May 27

Women's Lacrosse

*Exception - One event conducted during the weekend of the Women's Lacrosse Championship provided it is conducted within a 100-mile radius of the site of the championship:

Tuesday, May 29 - Wednesday, June 6

Softball

*Note - Dates are based on the 2018 NCAA Division I Women's Softball Championship. Dead period remains in effect until the day following the conclusion of the Women's College World Series. If the championship series ends after two games, the dead period ends on June 5 and the contact period would start on June 6.