

What is a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee? (SAAC)

A student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC) is a committee made up of student-athletes assembled to provide insight on the student-athlete experience and to offer input on the rules, regulations and policies that affect student-athletes' lives on NCAA member institution campuses. Presently, there are separate national SAACs for NCAA Divisions I, II and III member institutions. NCAA legislation mandates that all member institutions have SAACs on their respective campuses, and many NCAA conferences also have established SAACs. The information that follows will assist you in understanding how the network of SAACs, from individual campus committees to the national committees, interact and support one another to shape intercollegiate athletics policy.

History of the NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

An Association-wide SAAC was adopted by legislation approved at the 1989 NCAA Convention, and was formed primarily to review and offer student-athlete input on NCAA activities and proposed legislation that affected student-athlete welfare.

The initial national committee was comprised of student-athletes from all membership divisions for the purpose of ensuring that the student-athlete voice was one that accounted for the myriad of educational and athletics experiences of both female and male student-athletes at all NCAA member institutions. In August 1997, the NCAA federated along divisional lines. The federation, or split among divisions, caused the SAAC to federate as well. Presently, there are three SAACs representing NCAA Divisions I, II and III.

Each national divisional committee is comprised of both female and male student-athletes charged with the responsibility of assisting in the formulation of NCAA legislation. This is accomplished by providing student-athlete input on issues related to student-athlete welfare that are division-specific. Federation has increased student-athlete participation in the governance process of intercollegiate athletics by increasing the number of SAAC members from the former Association-wide committee of 28 student-athletes to a sum total of 78 members serving on the national Divisions I, II, and III committees.

The input of the respective Divisions I, II and III SAACs continues to be sought by a variety of constituencies within the Association. Student-athlete committee members have the opportunity to speak with their respective NCAA Management Councils, and the Divisions II and III SAACs continue to speak to legislative issues on the NCAA Convention floor.

Purpose

The purpose of the student-athlete advisory committee may vary across conferences and institutions. However, the following five points reflect the primary purposes of SAAC and should serve as a guideline when developing the SAAC's strategic plan:

- Generate a student-athlete voice within the institution;
- Solicit student-athlete response to proposed NCAA legislation ;
- Suggest potential NCAA legislation;
- Organize community service efforts;
- Create a vehicle for student-athlete representation on campus-wide or conference-wide committees.

Connection to NCAA and Conference Office

In 1995, NCAA member institutions adopted legislation mandating that each institution create a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. In addition, every conference must also create its own committee. Each institution's student-athlete advisory committee has a communication link with the national Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, either directly or through a conference student-athlete advisory committee. Please note the bylaw below which requires a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee on every campus.

Committee Membership

The membership of the Student-Athlete Advisory committee should be representative of the diversity of the conference institution's population and involve representatives from diverse sports. Each member serves as a liaison between the committee and his or her individual institution.

NCAA Bylaw

3.3.4.5 Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

Each active member conference shall establish a student-athlete advisory committee for its member institutions' student-athletes. The composition and duties of the committee shall be determined by the conference.

• **Key Roles in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee**

NCAA SAAC Liaison

The NCAA national office liaisons to the SAAC facilitate the national SAAC's efforts by providing leadership, administrative and managerial resources information, and implementing the decisions made by the committee.

National SAAC Representative

The role of the national SAAC representative is to be present and an active participant at all conference and national SAAC meetings and work as a liaison among the institutional, conference and national SAACs. The conference SAAC representative should be aware of issues and updates from both the conference and the NCAA, which affect all the institutions, conferences, and will be held to the same attendance and communication requirements as conference SAAC representatives where applicable.

Conference SAAC Liaison

The role of the conference SAAC liaison is to oversee development of the agenda, perform administrative responsibilities such as keeping the minutes and roster, manage the budget and perhaps manage a list serve comprised of conference SAAC representatives. It is a challenging balance between being the leader of the meeting and being a resource for the meetings; however, the liaison's responsibility is to be a resource and guide for the student-athletes as they set their own agenda and complete their tasks.

SAAC Executive Board

The NCAA recommends the creation of an executive board to oversee the operation of the student-athlete advisory committee. Traditional board member positions include president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. All of these positions are held by student-athletes.

Duties of the Executive Board

President

- Presides over meetings
- Serves as liaison to the conference office
- Functions as spokesperson from conference student-athletes to the community and the rest of campus.

Vice President

- Presides over meetings when president is absent
- Oversees subcommittees that may be formed as a response to the needs of the student-athletes
- Exercises all functions of the president in the absence of the president
- Performs all duties which are required of the office by the committee